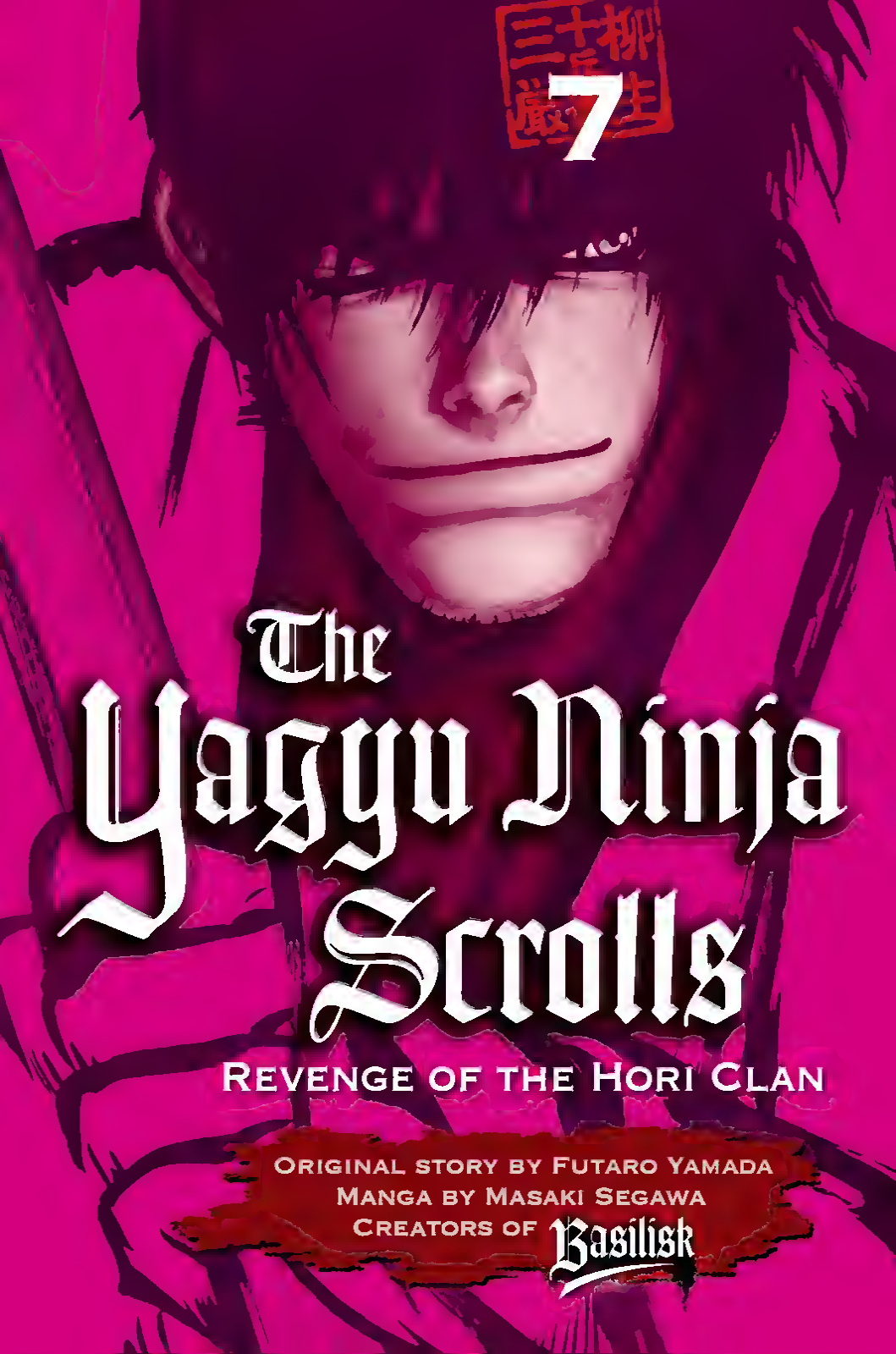
7
The
Yagyu Ninja
Scrolls
Revenge of the Hori Clan
Original story by Futaro Yamada
Manga by Masaki Segawa
Creators of Basilisk

The Yagyu Ninja Scrolls

Revenge of the Hori Clan

ORIGINAL STORY BY FŪTARO YAMADA
MANGA BY MASAKI SEGAWA

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY GEMMA COLLINGE
LETTERED BY B. HAN

7

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Letterer: B. Han

Honorifics Explained

In this manga book, you will find Japanese honorifics left intact in the translations. For those not familiar with how the Japanese use honorifics and, more important, how they differ from American honorifics, we present this brief overview.

Politeness has always been a critical facet of Japanese culture. Ever since the feudal era, when Japan was a highly stratified society, use of honorifics—which can be defined as polite speech that indicates relationship or status—has played an essential role in the Japanese language. When addressing someone in Japanese, an honorific usually takes the form of a suffix attached to one's name (example: "Asuna-san"), is used as a title at the end of one's name, or appears in place of the name itself (example: "Negi-sensei," or simply "Sensei!").

Honorifics can be expressions of respect or endearment. In the context of manga and anime, honorifics give insight into the nature of the relationship between characters. Many English translations leave out these important honorifics and therefore distort the feel of the original Japanese. Because Japanese honorifics contain nuances that English honorifics lack, it is our policy not to translate them. Here, instead, is a guide to some of the honorifics you may encounter in our manga.

-san: This is the most common honorific and is equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., Mrs. It is the all-purpose honorific and can be used in any situation where politeness is required.

-sama: This is one level higher than "-san" and is used to confer great respect.

-dono: This comes from the word "tono," which means "lord." It is an even higher level than "-sama" and confers utmost respect.

-kun: This suffix is used at the end of boys' names to express familiarity or endearment. It is also sometimes used by men among friends, or when addressing someone younger or of a lower station.

-chan: This is used to express endearment, mostly toward girls. It is also used for little boys, pets, and even among lovers. It gives a sense of childish cuteness.

Bozu: This is an informal way to refer to a boy, similar to the English terms "kid" and "squirt."

Sempai/Senpai: This title suggests that the addressee is one's senior in a group or organization. It is most often used in a school setting, where underclassmen refer to their upperclassmen as "sempai." It can also be used in the workplace, such as when a newer employee addresses an employee who has seniority in the company.

Kohai: This is the opposite of "sempai" and is used toward underclassmen in school or newcomers in the workplace. It connotes that the addressee is of a lower station.

Sensei: Literally meaning "one who has come before," this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.

-[blank]: This is usually forgotten in these lists, but it is perhaps the most significant difference between Japanese and English. The lack of honorific means that the speaker has permission to address the person in a very intimate way. Usually, only family, spouses, or very close friends have this kind of permission. Known as *yobisute*, it can be gratifying when someone who has earned the intimacy starts to call one by one's name without an honorific. But when that intimacy hasn't been earned, it can be very insulting.

The Yagyu Ninja Scrolls

7

ORIGINAL STORY BY
FŪTARO YAMADA

MANGA BY
MASAKI SEGAWA

The Yagyu Ninja Scrolls

INTRODUCTION OF CHARACTERS

SYNOPSIS: THE SEVEN WOMEN OF THE HORI CLAN THAT WAS SAVAGELY MURDERED, LED BY THE SWORD PRODIGY OF THE PERIOD, YAGYÛ JYÛBEI MITSUYOSHI, HAVE DEFEATED FOUR OF THE TERRIBLE SEVEN SPEARS. CONQUERING THEIR FEARS, THEY ENTER THE DOMAIN OF AIZU. THERE THEY ARE GREETED BY LORD KATÔ AKINARI, THE THREE REMAINING SEVEN SPEARS, AND A SINISTER FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

THE NEW SINISTER COUPLE ARE ASHINA DÔHAKU, LEADER OF THE ASHINA CLAN, AND HIS DAUGHTER, OYURA. EVEN THE SEVEN SPEARS, WHO WERE TRAINED BY DÔHAKU, ARE IN THE DARK ABOUT HIS ORIGINS. OYURA ALSO HOLDS MYSTERIOUS SECRETS DEEP INSIDE. THE SPINDLE OF FATE KEEPS SPINNING!

THE SURVIVING WOMEN OF THE HORI CLAN

OKEI

SAKURA

OSAWA

OTORI

OFUE

OCHIE

OSHINA

YAGYÛ JYÛBEI MITSUYOSHI

JYÛBEI'S MASTER AND HIS STUDENTS

SHINKABÔ

TAKUAN SÔHÔ

RESIDENT ABBOT OF TOKAI TEMPLE
TEMPLE OF THE SHOGUN

TAMONBÔ

YAKUSHIBÔ

JYÛJYÔBÔ

SHÔCHIKUBÔ

UNAINBÔ

RYÛÔBÔ

THE AIZU SEVEN SPEARS

ASHINA DÔHAKU

ASHINA CLAN HEAD

OYURA

HIRAGA MAGOBEI

REVENGE ACCOMPLISHED

DAIDÔJI TESSAI

REVENGE ACCOMPLISHED

WASHINOSU RENSUKE

REVENGE ACCOMPLISHED

KATÔ AKINARI

AIZU CLAN HEAD

KÔRO GINSHIRÔ

MANIPULATES A MYSTERIOUS ART

GUSOKU JYÔNOSHIN

REVENGE ACCOMPLISHED

URUSHIDO KÔSHICHIRÔ

SWORDSMAN

SHIBA ICHIGANBÔ

WIELDS A WHIP

The Yagyu Ninja Scrolls 7

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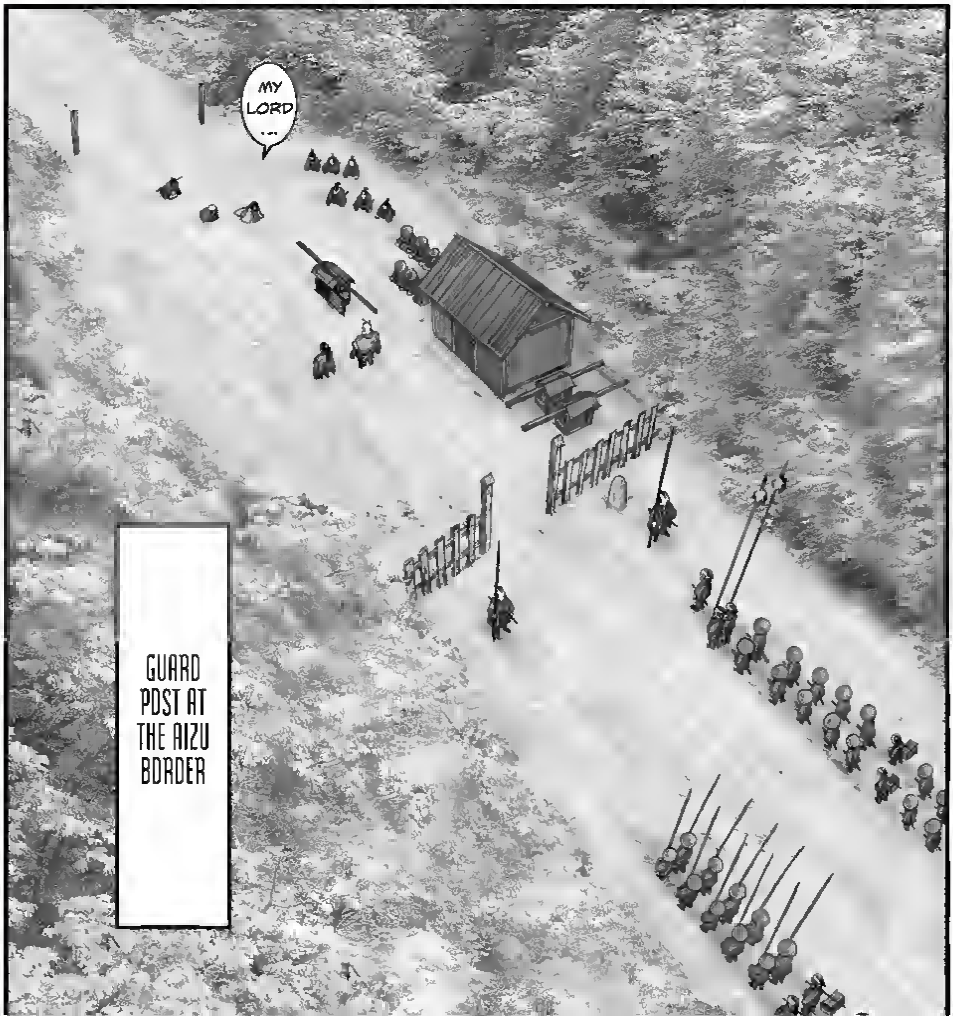
SEISHITÔGE

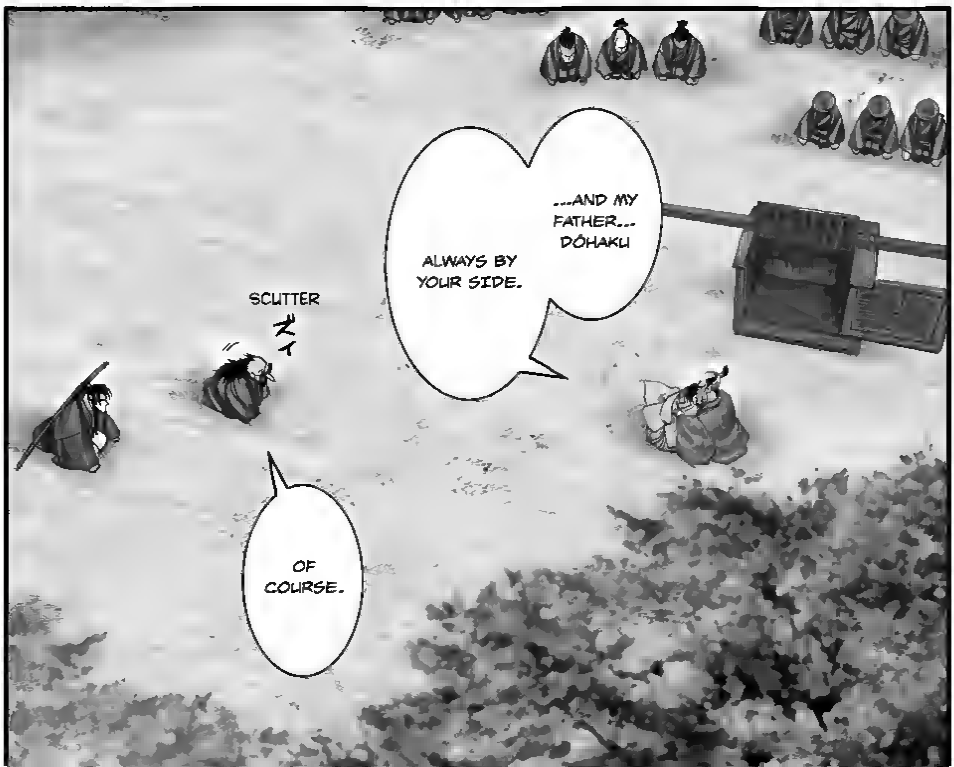

MY LORD...
GUARD POST AT THE AIZU BORDER

STORY 51: FINALLY IN AIZU (2)
IT MAKES ME SO HAPPY TO WELCOME YOU HOME.
MORE THAN ANY-THING...
O... O...
OYURA...
よたっ
STAGGER
...!
OYURA
OYURA...
OYURA...
よろっ
QUIVER
LORD OF AIZU KATO AKINARI

MY LORD...
PLEASE...
ゆら
FLUTTER
ぴっ
SLIP

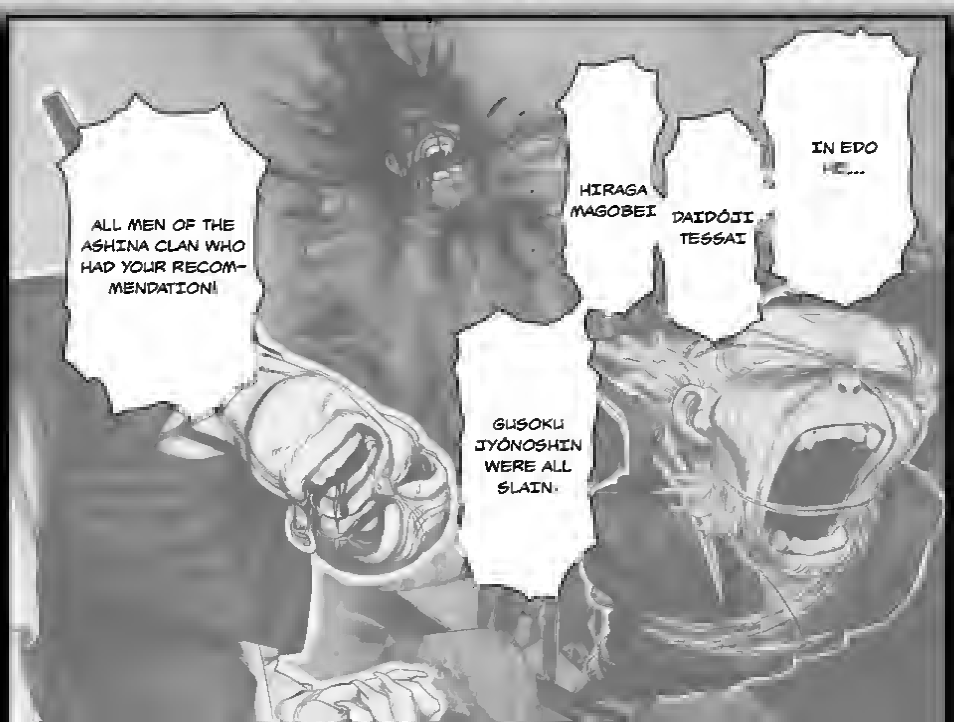
SUCK THE LIFE OUT OF ME.
O... O...
O... OYURA...
MY LORD...

...
...PLEASE RELAX NOW.
FROM NOW ON, YOU HAVE ME...
SLIP


...AND MY FATHER... DÔHAKU
ALWAYS BY YOUR SIDE.
SCUTTER
OF COURSE.

NOW THAT YOU ARE IN AIZU, YOU ARE PROTECTED BEHIND A WALL OF IRON!
WHEN YOU WERE IN EDO THERE WAS NOTHING WE COULD DO.
HEAD OF THE ASHINA CLAN ASHINA DOHAKU
ASHINA CLAN MEN...
...HAVE BEEN PLACED ALONG THE BORDER.
FROM THE MOUNTAIN PASSES...
...TO THE FOREST TRAILS.

DO... DÔHAKU!
IT'S NOT ONLY THE HORI WOMEN WHO ARE PURSUING ME!
THERE IS SOME MYSTERIOUS MAN HELPING THEM!


IN EDO HE...
HIRAGA GAGOBEI
DAIDÔJI TESSAI
GUSOKU JYÔNOSHIN WERE ALL SLAIN.
ALL MEN OF THE ASHINA CLAN WHO HAD YOUR RECOM-MENDATION!

PERHAPS IT IS A GOOD THING THAT THEY WERE KILLED.
キロリ
CLENCH
TESSAI... MAGOBEI... JYÔNOSHIN...
EVEN I COULD NOT HAVE EASILY KILLED THESE MEN...
HOWEVER, THEY WERE CLUMSY.
AIZU SEVEN SPEARS, SHIBA ICHIGANBÔ
AIZU SEVEN SPEARS, KÔRO GINSHIRÔ
HOW-EVER...
ICHIGANBÔ, GINSHIRÔ

I CAN'T SEE WASHINO RENSUKE HERE.
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM?
AIZU SEIEN
SPEARS URUSHIDO
KOSHICHIRO

HE WAS ON HORSE-BACK SO HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE...
HE LEFT THE KAMIGOYA LODGINGS AHEAD OF US.
?!
RENSUKE ISN'T HERE?!

SHUFFLE
NGH
...
THE ENEMY MUST HAVE DEFEATED RENSUKE.
IDIOTS!
SHUFFLE
PUNISHMENT FOR HIS NAIVETY...
PRETTY ASTONISHING THAT YOU DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE YOUR FRIEND HAD BEEN DEFEATED!
GLARE

.....
.....
CLENCH
?

THAT'S STRANGE...
WHAT IS IT, HIKOBEE?
THE LORD'S ENTOURAGE IS RIGHT THERE...
BUT NINE LITTERS HAVE ENTERED, QUITE FREELY.

DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S STRANGE, JINBACHIRŌ?
WITH THEM ARE FIVE WANDERING PRIESTS...
HMM.
WELL.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, SUKENAI?
HMM...
RUSTLE
LET'S WATCH.

YAGYŪ JYŪBEI
MITSUYOSHI
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU!?
RAGE

WE ARE TRAVELING TO DEWA, KAMINOYAMA.
WE ASK FOR SAFE PASSAGE THROUGH THE DOMAIN OF AIZU.
WE ARE TRAVELING WITH THE RESIDENT PRIEST OF EDO SHINAGAWA BANSHOZAN TOKAI TEMPLE, TAKUAN SÔHÔ.
YAKUSHIDO
SHÔCHIKUBO
. . . .
WHAT !?
PRIEST TAKUAN?!

TAKUAN

?
STORY 51 END

WE ARE TRAVELING TO DEWA, KAMINOYAMA.
WE ASK FOR SAFE PASSAGE THROUGH THE DOMAIN OF AIZU.
THE AIZU BORDER, SEISHITÔGE
WE ARE TRAVELING WITH THE RESIDENT PRIEST OF EDO SHINAGAWA BANSHOZAN TOKAI TEMPLE, TAKUAN SÔHÔ.
.....
PRIEST TAKUAN?!
WHAT!?
TAKUAN ...

AH... I SUP-POSE...
I TRUST THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS?

RUSTLE
WAIT.
...

HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED OFFICIAL NOTICE OF YOUR VISIT.
IF YOU ARE TAKUAN-SAMA THEN YOU ARE THE GREAT MAN WHO CONVERTED THE SHOGUN'S FAMILY...

HOW THE HELL DO WE KNOW IT'S REALLY PRIEST TAKUAN IN THERE?!
HEY!
OUR MASTER DISLIKES ANY KIND OF FUSS MADE OVER HIM SO YOU DO NOT HAVE TO CONCERN YOURSELVES.
OH NO! THIS IS A PERSONAL SIGHTSEEING TOUR.
SMILE
SMILE
UMM...YOU SEE, IT'S JUST THAT OUR LORD...
...HE'S ATTEMPTING TO ENTER AIZU IN SECRET, TO AVOID SOME VILLAINS WHO HAVE BEEN PURSUING HIM...
MASTER.
IT APPEARS THAT THEY DOUBT YOUR IDENTITY.
OH DEAR.

!!
WHA-
...
THAT WAS THE CHANTING PRIEST AT KASUKABE!
I HEARD.
I HEARD.
SLIP.
RESIDENT PRIEST OF BANSHOZAN TOKAI TEMPLE
TAKUAN SOHO
STORY 52: FINALLY IN AIZU (3)

I HAVE SEEN HIS FACE...IN EDO CASTLE...
IT'S REALLY HIM...
THE PRIEST WE MET ON THE ÔSHÛ ROAD!
IT WAS TAKUAN?!
. . . .

I SMELL WOMEN...
!?

OPEN UP ONE OF THE LITTERS.
ICHIGANBŌ.

FWUUP
WITH PLEASURE.

SWISH
WOAH ?!
!!
!!
WAH!
AAAH!
CRASH
CRASH
CRASH
AHH!
RIP
WHOOSH

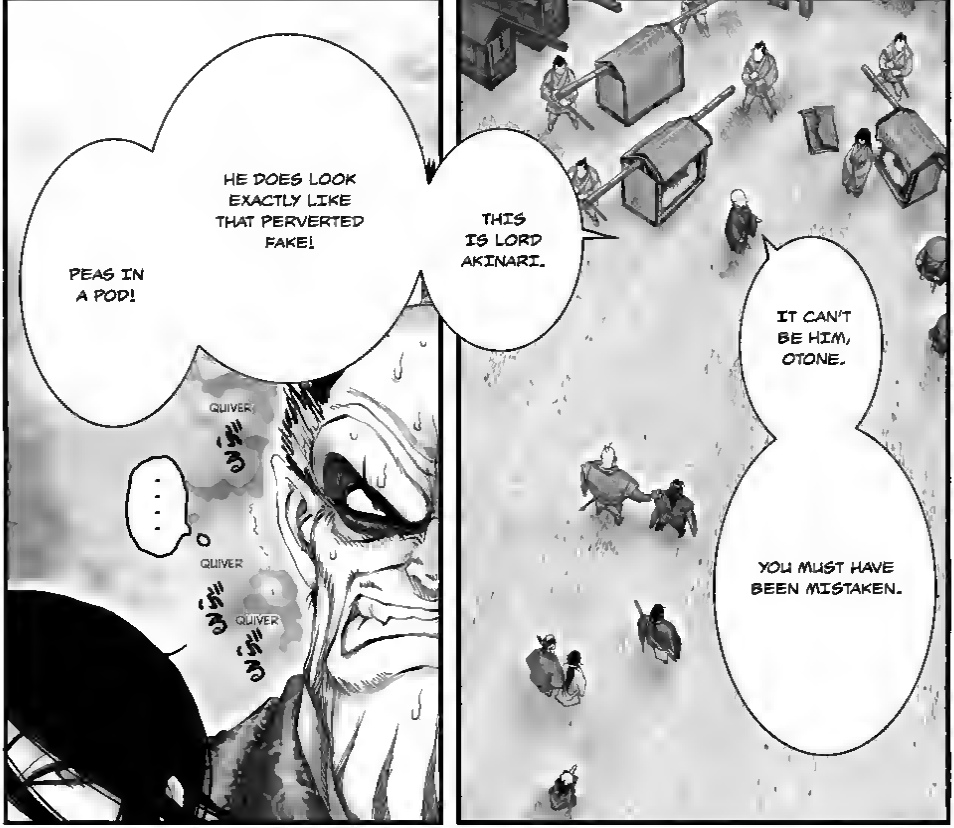
OTOKE
FWLIP
SNAP
FWLIP
THERE IS A GIRL THERE!
SCRATCH SCRATCH
OH DEAR... THIS ISN'T GOOD.
I SUPPOSE YOU'LL HAVE TO SHOW YOURSELF NOW.
YOU FOUND OUT THAT I AM TRAVELING WITH A WOMAN...
SLIP
...

THE GIRL FROM THE KOGA LODG-INGS!
ACK.
....
OTONE ---
WHILST WE WERE ON OUR JOURNEY WE BUMPED INTO SOME FOOLISH DAIMYO...
...AND WE HEARD A GIRL IN HIS LITTER SCREAMING...

THAT MAN...HE SAID THAT HE WAS KATÔ, LORD OF AIZU.
BUT HE MUST HAVE BEEN LYING...
OTONE! TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THAT MAN.
IF IT IS THE MAN WHO FORCED HIMSELF ON YOU THEN DO NOT BE AFRAID TO SAY.
THAT MAN THERE LOOKS JUST LIKE THE FAKE DAIMYO WE MET.
OH?
ACK...
DRIP
DRIP

WE WILL RIP OUT HIS WINDPIPE.
CLENCH
PRT

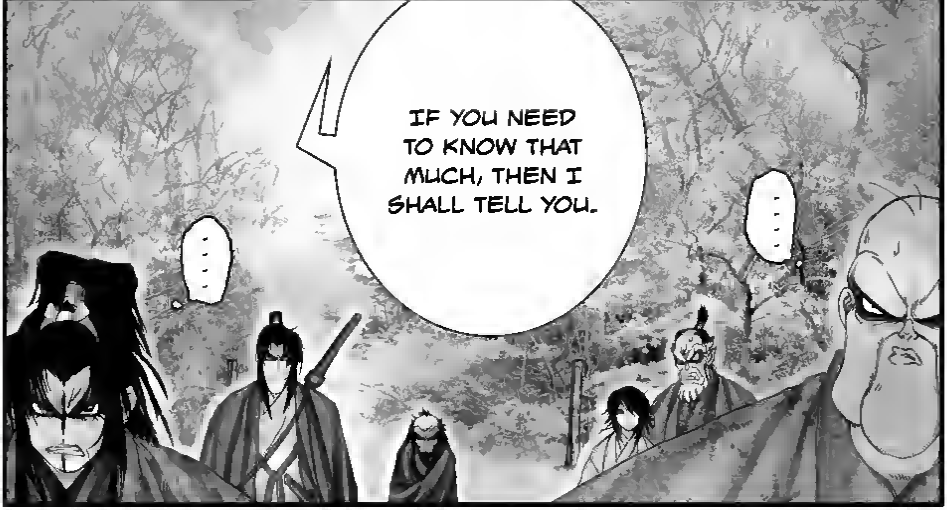
THIS IS THE REAL OFFICIAL HERE...
TAKUAN-SAMA.
.....?
WHAT? THE REAL THING?!
IN THAT CASE, HE SHOULD BE ACQUAINTED WITH ME.
OH! WHAT A SURPRISE!
IT IS THE REAL MAN!
IT...HAS BEEN A WHILE...
LORD TAKUAN...


IT CAN'T BE HIM, OTONE.
YOU MUST HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN.
THIS IS LORD AKINARI.
HE DOES LOOK EXACTLY LIKE THAT PERVERTED FAKE!
PEAS IN A POD!
QUIVER
QUIVER
QUIVER

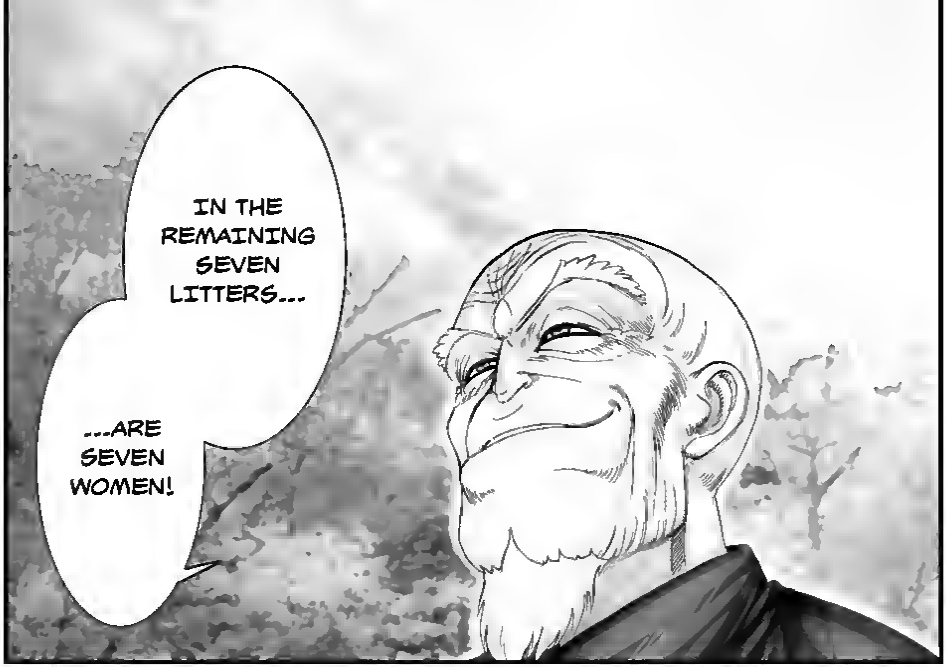
ARMY OF AIZU!
THERE IS AN IMPERSONATOR OF THE OFFICIAL ON THE ROADS!
YOU WOULD DO WELL TO BE CAREFUL!

YOU...
LEAVE IT, GINSHIRÔ
...
WELL THEN, REAL OFFICIAL.
DO WE HAVE PASSAGE THROUGH YOUR DOMAIN?
.....

HMPH ...
WAIT! YOU INSOLENT PRIESTS!
YOU CANNOT PASS!
WITHOUT LETTING US SEE INSIDE THE OTHER SEVEN LITTERS.
MOST DISRESPECTFUL.
MY SON.


IF YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT MUCH, THEN I SHALL TELL YOU.
.....
.....

IN THE REMAINING SEVEN LITTERS...
...ARE SEVEN WOMEN!
STORY 52 END

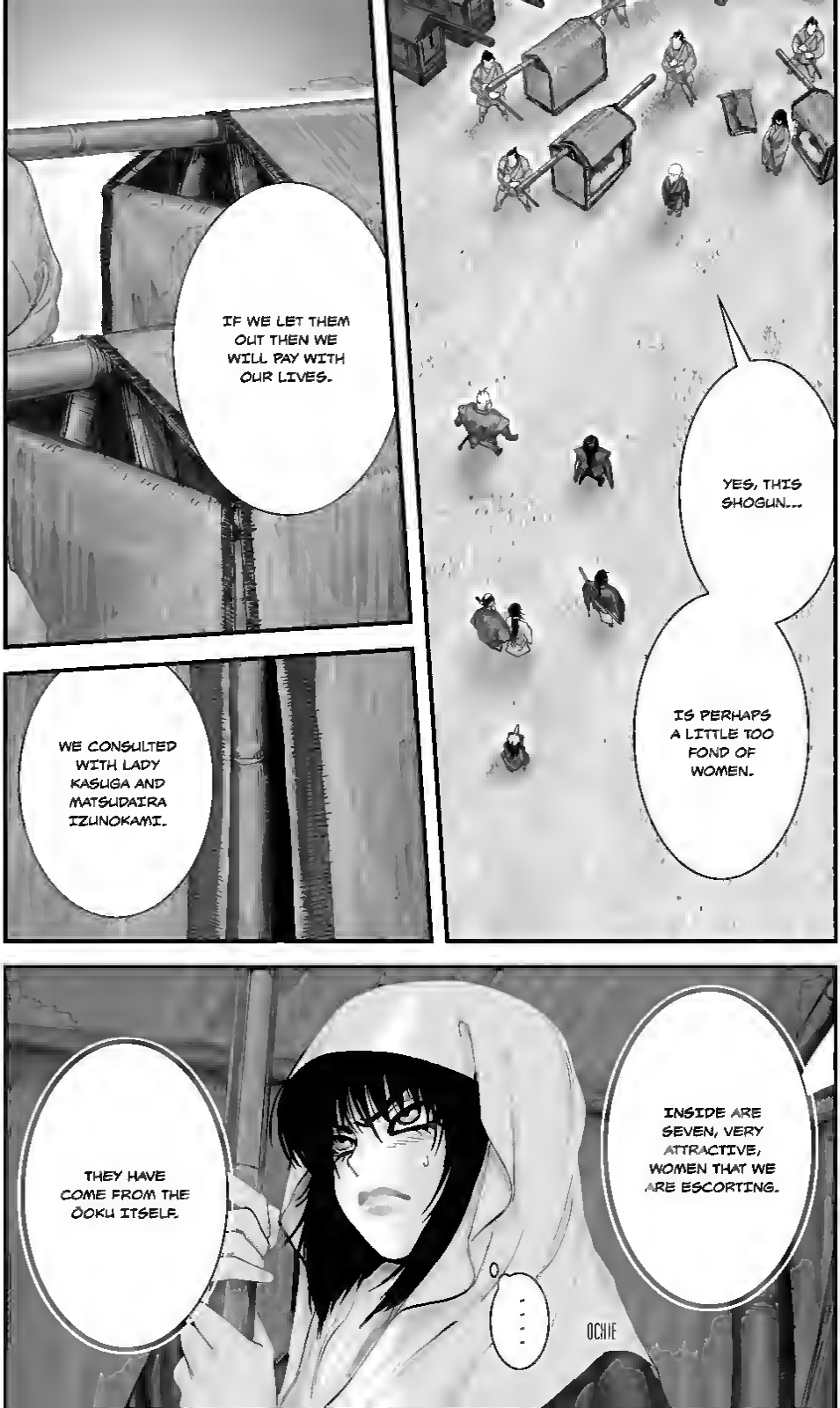

IN THE REMAINING SEVEN LITTERS...
...ARE SEVEN WOMEN!

...
カチャ
CLICK
!!

SHOW THEM TO US!
GAH!
WOMEN!

STORY 53: FINALLY IN AIZU (4)

I SHALL NOT.
WHAT...
CLENCH
GU...
INSIDE THESE LITTERS ARE...
THE SHOGUN'S HOUSEHOLD'S MOST FAVORITE WOMEN.
WHAT?!
THE SHOGUN'S HOUSE-HOLD?


IF WE LET THEM OUT THEN WE WILL PAY WITH OUR LIVES.
YES, THIS SHOGUN...
IS PERHAPS A LITTLE TOO FOND OF WOMEN.
WE CONSULTED WITH LADY KASUGA AND MATSUDAIRA IZUNOKAMI.
INSIDE ARE SEVEN, VERY ATTRACTIVE, WOMEN THAT WE ARE ESCORTING.
THEY HAVE COME FROM THE ŌOKU ITSELF.
....
OCHIE

THESE SEVEN WOMEN...
OFUE
WE ARE TAKING THEM TO THE TEAHOUSES OF DEWA, KAMIN-OYAMA.
WE SHALL SPEND A LITTLE TIME THERE AND THEN RETURN...
OKEI
THEY ARE THE FAVORED MISTRESSES OF THE SHOGUN...
SO I CANNOT LET THEM BE VIEWED BY OTHER MEN ON OUR JOURNEY.
OSEWA
WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT THERE ARE NO RUMORS...
SO WE HAVE TAKEN THEM IN LITTERS SO AS NOT TO ATTRACT ATTENTION...
SAKURA
OSHINA

.....
THE EFFORTS I HAVE MADE, OFFICIAL.
YOU MUST UNDER-STAND...
TURN
SO WITH THAT WE SHALL TAKE OUR LEAVE.
ICHIGANBÔ.

OPEN THE OTHER SEVEN LITTERS...
HAVE THEM ALL COME OUT!
!?
....
I AM SURE THAT THERE ARE NOT CONCUBINES IN THOSE SEVEN LITTERS...
I WOULD STAKE...
...THE 400,000 KOKU OF AIZU ON IT!
GRIN
AH... NO!
DO... DOHAKU!
LORD AKINARI ...
YOU CANNOT WISH TO LOSE THE 400,000 KOKU OF AIZU?

HMM...
IT LOOKS STRANGE.

PERHAPS SOMETHING HAPPENED AT THE GUARD POST?
HMM...

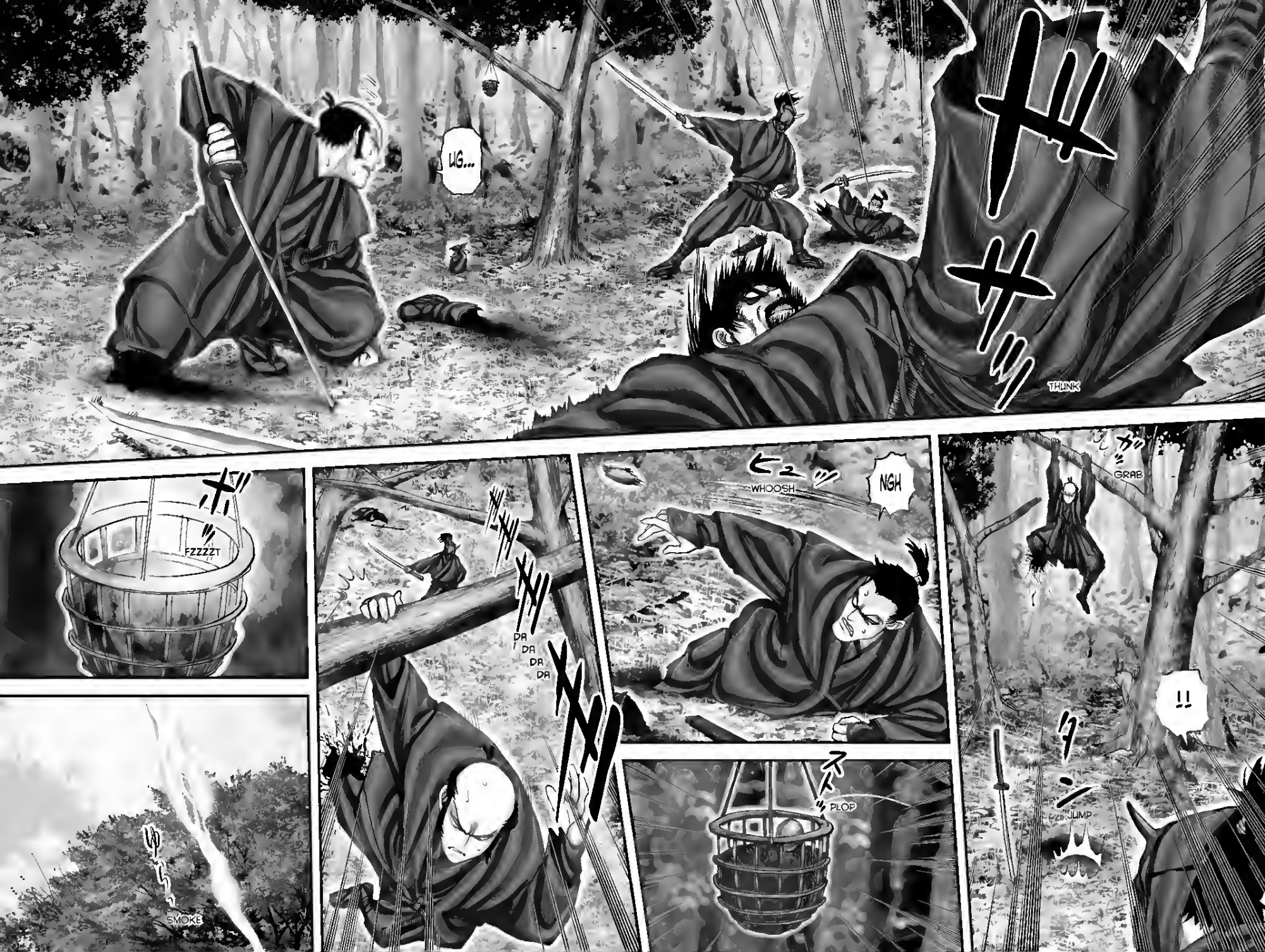
!?
SWISH
HEY!
RUSTLE

THIS FLARE...
HOW DO YOU LIGHT IT?
!!

HM.
SOME ROGUES ARE SNEAKING IN!
THERE WERE EIGHT MEN.
WHILST YOU WEREN'T PAYING ATTENTION, SEVEN MEN HAVE ALREADY SLIPPED OVER THE BORDER.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
JUMP
NO...FIRST WE WILL TAKE YOU DOWN.
YOU HAVE TO LIGHT THE FLARE QUICKLY AND WARN THE OTHERS.
ZAH
ZAH
ZAH
ZAH
ZAH

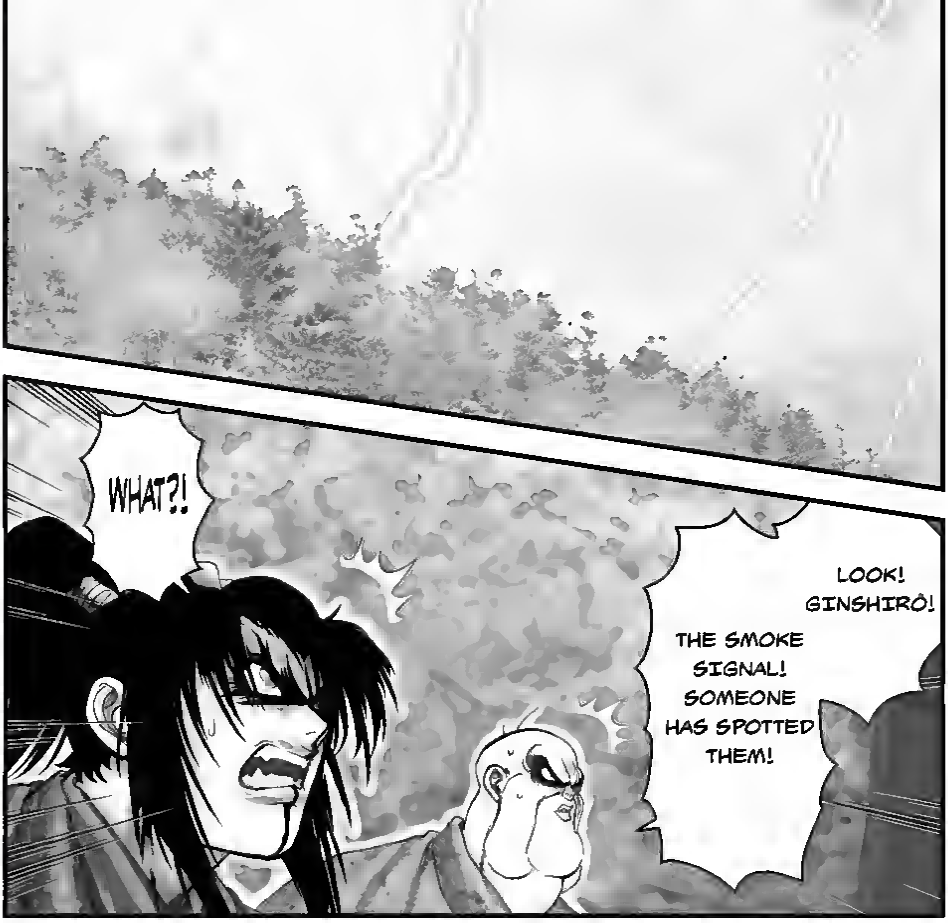
RAAAA
A
AR
SPLAT
WHOOSH
!!

SPLATTER
UGH
GAH.
ARGH
HUH
ガーン
THUD
SWISH
THUD


UG...
THUNK
FZZZZT
WHOOSH
NGH
DA
DA
DA
DA
GRAB
!!
JUMP
PLOP
SMOKE

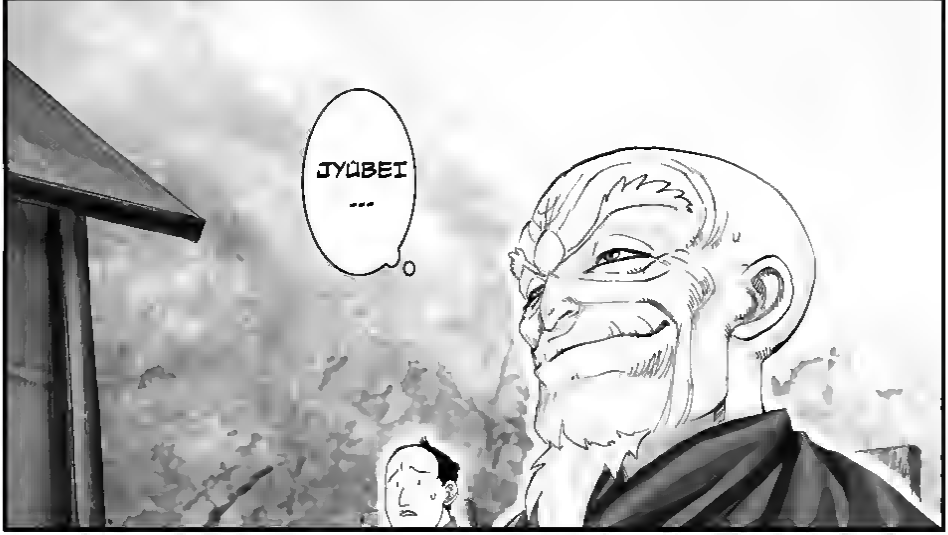
WHAT?!
LOOK! GINSHIRŌ!
THE SMOKE SIGNAL! SOMEONE HAS SPOTTED THEM!
STORY 53 END

三代目
中村
芝翫


WHAT?!
LOOK! GINSHIRŌ!
THE SMOKE SIGNAL! SOMEONE HAS SPOTTED THEM!

DA DA DA

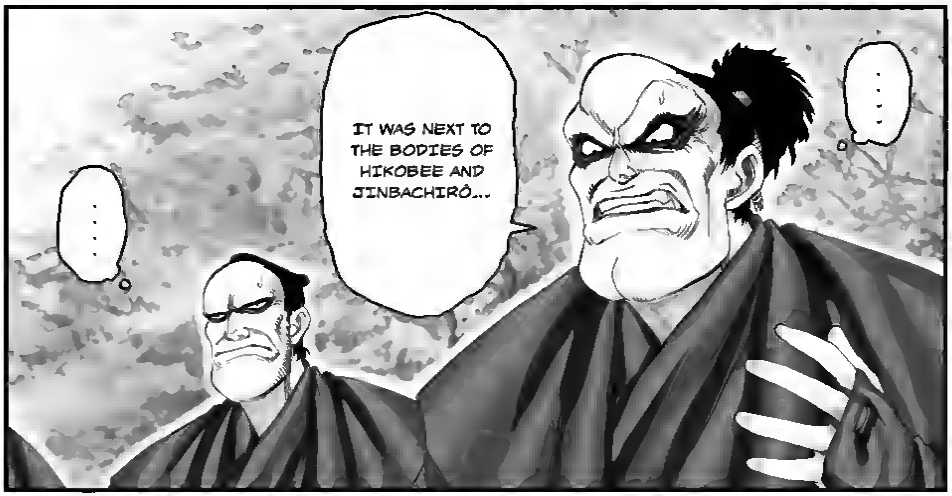
STORY 54: FINALLY IN AIZU (5)


JYUBEI
...

キ
CLINK

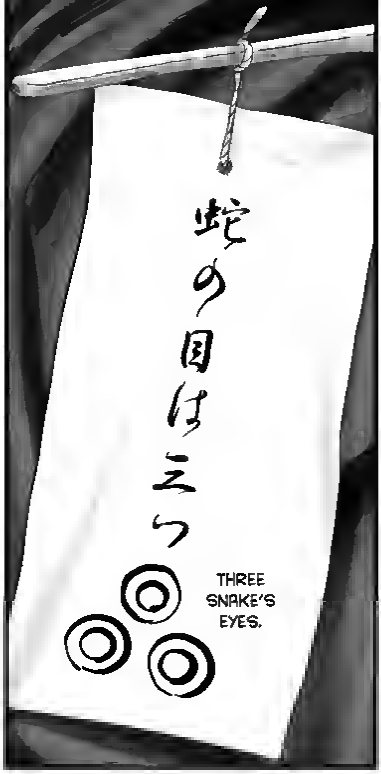
NOT EASY OPPONENTS
THIS DOESN'T BODE WELL FOR WHEN WE'RE IN AIZU
THESE ARE...
ASHINA'S MEN. THE SAME AS THE AIZU SEVEN SPEARS...

THUD
THREE SNAKE'S EYES.
THERE WAS THIS.


IT WAS NEXT TO THE BODIES OF HIKOBEE AND JINBACHIRÔ...
. . . .
. . . .

. . . .
. . . .

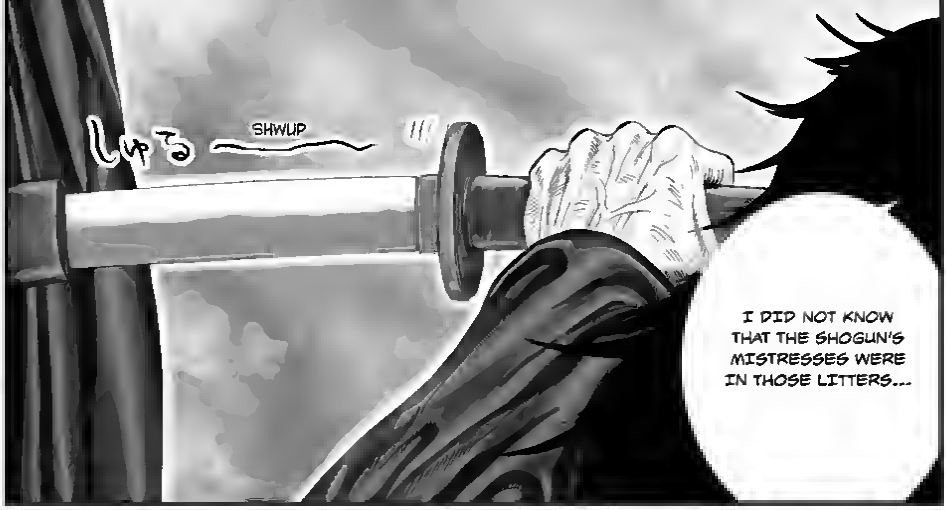
THREE SNAKE'S EYES...?


蛇の目はこう
THREE SNAKE'S EYES.

HOW COULD HE GET RENSUKE!
THAT HANNYA MASK...
QUIVER

THIS IS RENSUKE'S HEAD!
RENSUKE... RENSUKE'S HEAD...
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE

YOU REALLY DO SEEM IN A SPOT OF BOTHER...
OH... LORD AKINARI.
TAKUAN-SAMA.
カシ
CHING
SO WE WILL TAKE OUR LEAVE.
THE ROAD TO DEWA IS LONG.
AH...
UMM...
HMM?


しゅる
SHWUP
I DID NOT KNOW THAT THE SHOGUN'S MISTRESSES WERE IN THOSE LITTERS...

I DESERVE TO DIE A THOUSAND TIMES.
I HAVE BEEN MOST DISRESPECTFUL...
キン
CHING

FWUP

...

WHA...
SHWUP
SHWUP
FWUP

ズシュッ
FWLIP
MEN.
YE...
YES ...
YE... YES...
GO BACK.
PLEASE FORGIVE AIZU'S CRIME?
WILL YOU NOW...
GRIN
ニタリ

TMP
TMP
ONE
TWO
TWO
ONE

SHALL WE FOLLOW THEM?
.....
NO.... LEAVE THEM.

GRIP

FATHER....

NGH...
SHRUUP
SIR DŌHAKU...
WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
. . . .
FOR TAKUAN.
GRIN

TO LET HIM KNOW THAT HIS OPPONENT REALLY IS...
...AN INVINCIBLE MONSTER.

AIZUWAKA-
MATSU CASTLE
(TSURUGA
CASTLE)
TENSHU
TOWER

FSSST

THIS IS...
THESE FLOWERS WERE CHOSEN FROM WITHIN AIZU.
...SO MUCH MORE THAN THE EDO FLOWER HELL...

NOW YOU ARE IN AIZU...
EVERYTHING ON THE 400,000 KOKU IS YOURS
TO ENJOY AS YOU WILL.
STORY 54 END

...

DÔHAKU-SAMA.

YES...IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, THEY WERE IN THOSE LITTERS.

TAKUAN IS...
...WITHOUT A DOUBT SUPPORTING THE HORI WOMEN...

SO THAT WE COULD UNDERSTAND WHAT SORT OF MAN TAKUAN IS.
?

IF YOU KNEW THAT WHY DID YOU LET THEM GO?

IF THERE WAS EVEN A SMALL CHANCE THAT THERE REALLY WERE THE SHOGUN'S CONCUBINES IN THOSE LITTERS...
THAT IS THE PRIEST THE SHOGUN CALLS MASTER.
I HAVE HEARD THAT HE IS PROFICIENT IN THE ART OF WAR.

THAT WAS THE PRIEST'S TRICK.
...OUR LORD WOULD NOT HAVE ESCAPED UNHARMED.
....

I SEE. FIRST, ON THE SAFE SIDE, YOU WOULD LURE THEM INTO AIZU...
...THEN YOU WILL LOOK FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT TO DISPOSE OF TAKUAN!

NO... WE WILL NOT TOUCH TAKUAN.
HARMING THE PRIEST TO THE SHOGUN IN PURSUIT OF THE HORI WOMEN...
...WOULD BE ASKING FOR MORE TROUBLE.

STORY 55: DÔHAKU'S SECRET
THAT IS WHY WE ARE NOW...
...AT A GREAT DISADVANTAGE HERE.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO...
...
I HAVE SHOWN TAKUAN... THAT I AM A TERRIBLE...
INVIN-CIBLE ENEMY.
HE WILL PROBABLY NOT TRY TO ATTACK.

IF HE WON'T ATTACK, THEN THAT IS GOOD.
I BELIEVE THE HANDPICKED ELITE OF THE ASHINA, YOURSELVES...
...CAN SNATCH AWAY THE HORI WOMEN FROM BEHIND TAKUAN'S BACK.
AND CRUSH HIM INTO A BLOODY PULP.

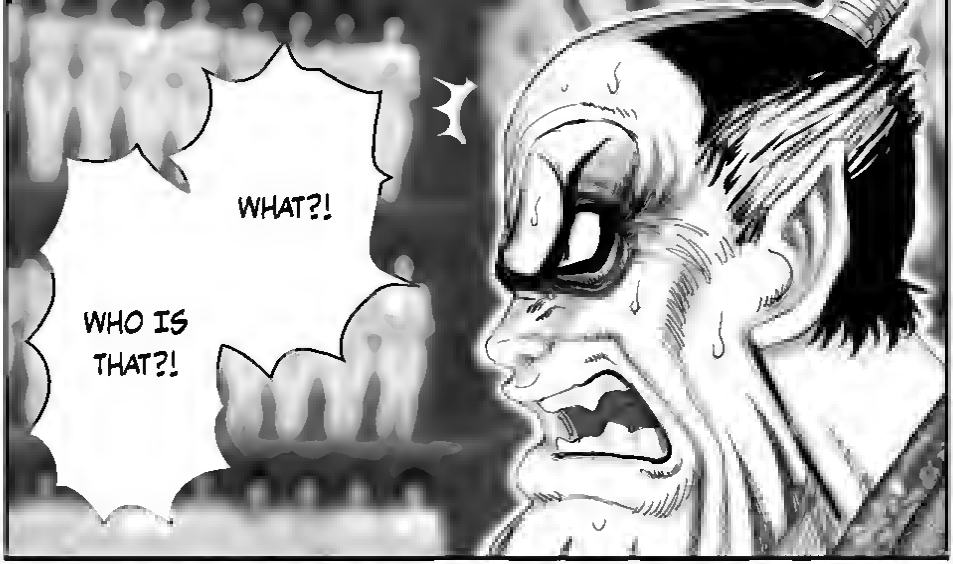
HE TOOK DOWN SUKENAI, HIKOBEE, AND JINBACHIRÔ IN ONE BLOW...
THAT IS NO ORDINARY MAN.
HOWEVER, THE TROUBLE WILL BE THE HANNYA MASK...

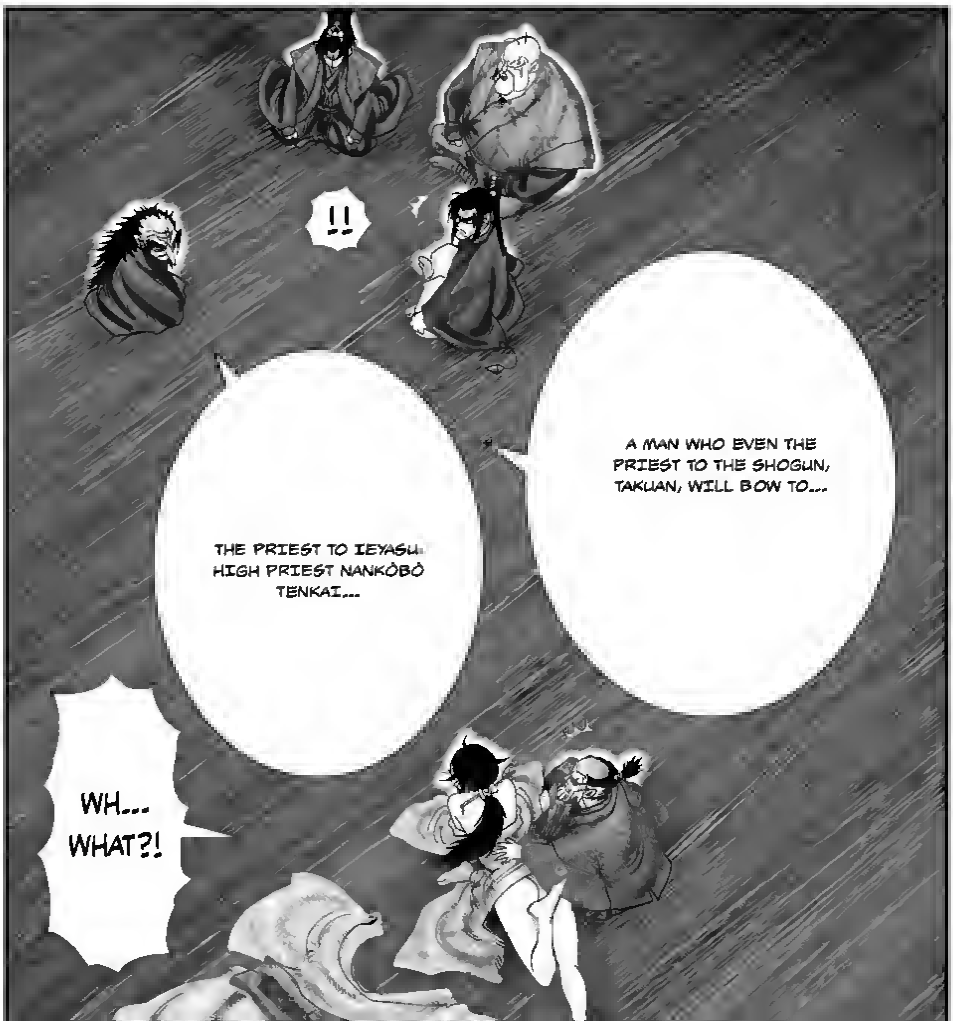
OF COURSE!
AS YOU COMMAND!

THE HANNYA MASK...
CLENCH
ぎゅーっ
...I DON'T... KNOW...
KOSHICHIRŌ, COULD YOU DO IT?
PERHAPS I WILL HAVE TO...
...TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE HANNYA MASK MYSELF...
DŌHAKU.

WE HAVE ALREADY MADE AN ENEMY OF THE SHOGUN'S SISTER, SENHIME...
SURELY IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA TO MAKE AN ENEMY OF THE SHOGUN'S PRIEST AS WELL...

THE SHOGUN AUTHORITIES...
WE HAVE AN ALLY THERE-

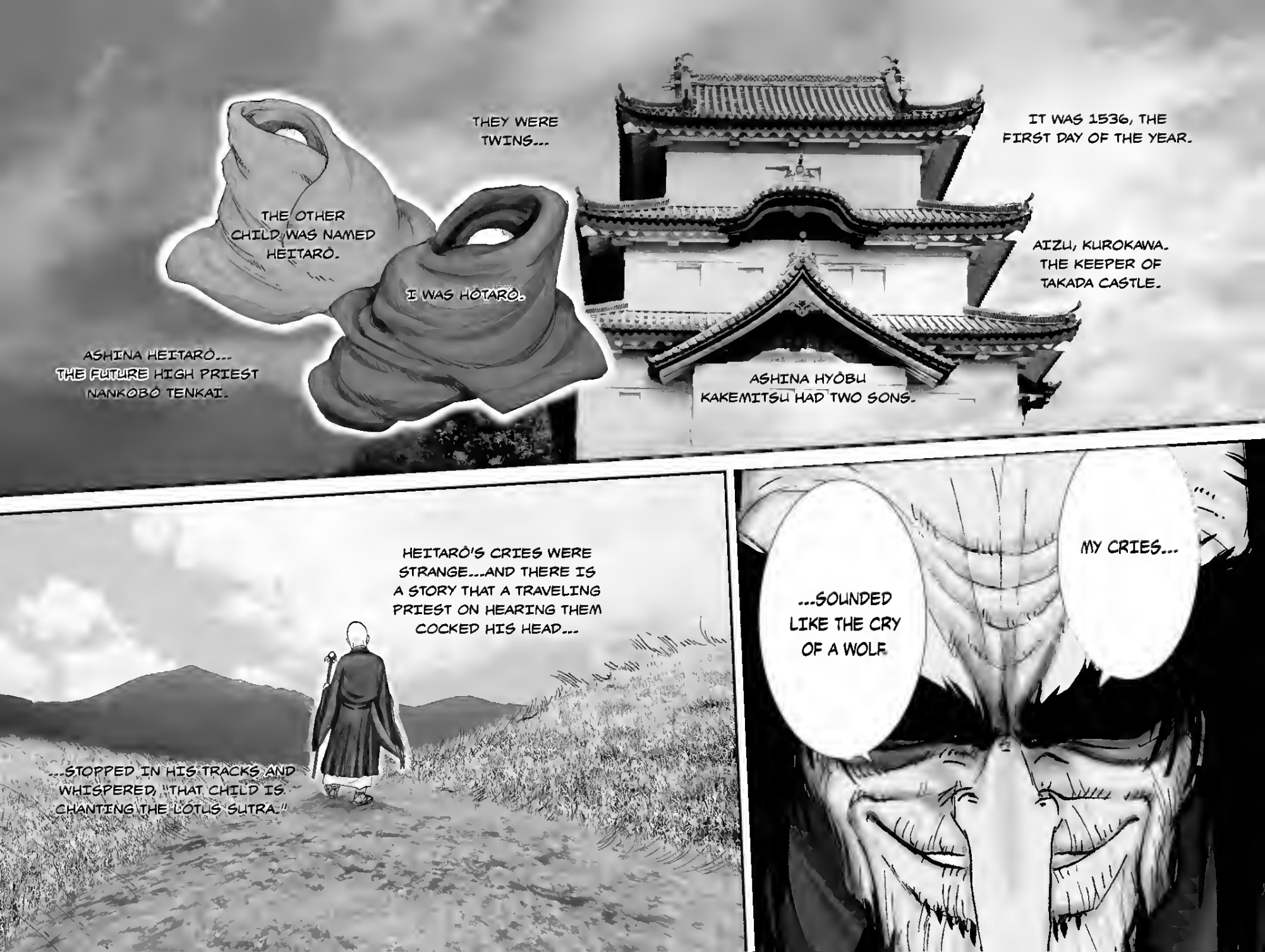

WHAT?!
WHO IS THAT?!


!!
A MAN WHO EVEN THE PRIEST TO THE SHOGUN, TAKUAN, WILL BOW TO...
THE PRIEST TO IEYASU: HIGH PRIEST NANKÔBÔ TENKAI...
WH... WHAT?!

MY IDENTICAL TWIN.
OF THE SAME ASHINA HOUSE.

DÔ... DÔHAKU?!

TENKAI CALLED HIMSELF HEITARÔ AND GAVE A MESSAGE ASKING IF YOU WANTED TO DESTROY THE ASHINA FAMILY!
KEPT THIS SECRET UNTIL NOW?!
HOW HAVE YOU...
IT WAS 107 YEARS AGO....
.....
IT IS FOR THAT REASON...I WILL FINALLY TELL YOU.


IT WAS 1536, THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR.
AIZU, KUROKAWA. THE KEEPER OF TAKADA CASTLE.
ASHINA HYÔBU KAKEMITSU HAD TWO SONS.
THEY WERE TWINS...
I WAS HÔTARÔ.
THE OTHER CHILD WAS NAMED HEITARÔ.
ASHINA HEITARÔ... THE FUTURE HIGH PRIEST NANKÔBÔ TENKAI.
HEITARÔ'S CRIES WERE STRANGE...AND THERE IS A STORY THAT A TRAVELING PRIEST ON HEARING THEM COCKED HIS HEAD...
...STOPPED IN HIS TRACKS AND WHISPERED, "THAT CHILD IS CHANTING THE LOTUS SUTRA."
MY CRIES...
...SOUNDED LIKE THE CRY OF A WOLF.

DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE WERE TWINS...
WE WERE BORN UNDER ENTIRELY DIFFERENT STARS...

BUT OUR CONSTANT FIGHTING SOMETIMES ENDANGERED O[illegible] WELL-BEING.
AND COULD NOT GO UNNOTICED BY OUR FATHER.

IT WAS HEITARO'S DESIRE...
TO JOIN THE PRIESTHOOD...

MY BROTHER FOLLOWED THE BUDDHIST PRIESTHOOD...BECOMING THE HIGH PRIEST NANKOBO TENKAI.
AND SO ALMOST 100 YEARS AGO I LEARNED THE ART OF NINJA AND ALMOST EVERY POSSIBLE TYPE OF WARFARE, BECOMING ASHINA DOHAKU, BEFORE YOU NOW.
SO EVEN TENKAI WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OVERLOOK A THREAT TO THE ASHINA NAME!
STILL THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE SAME ASHINA BLOOD RUNS THROUGH OUR VEINS.

HOWEVER MUCH HE HATES ME IN HIS HEART...
BUT IF HE HATES DÔHAKU-SAMA...
...SURELY LORD TENKAI CANNOT BE ON OUR SIDE?
YES, THAT IS POSSIBLY TRUE.
BUT...HE CANNOT COMPLETELY THROW AWAY THE ASHINA NAME.

I UNDERSTAND WHAT HE MEANT BY HIS MESSAGE ON THE ÔSHU ROAD.
.....

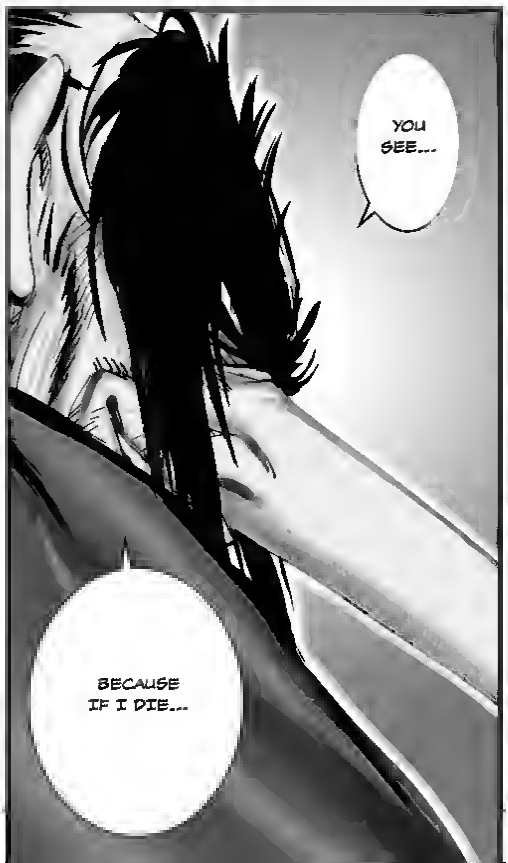
THAT IS PROOF THAT TENKAI IS CAREFULLY WATCHING EVERYTHING. HE IS CONCERNED!
GRIN
にやっ

ASK HIM WHY
HE IS INTENT ON RUINING THE NAME OF ASHINA.
TELL HIM HEITARÔ ASKED....

DŌHAKU...
SO CAN'T YOU ASK TENKAI TO HAVE TENJUIN AND TAKUAN PULL BACK?
.....

IT IS THE DISGRACE OF THE ASHINA NAME THAT HE DOES NOT WANT!

WE CAN THREATEN HIM.
HOWEVER, IF THINGS GET TRICKY RATHER THAN RELYING ON HIM...

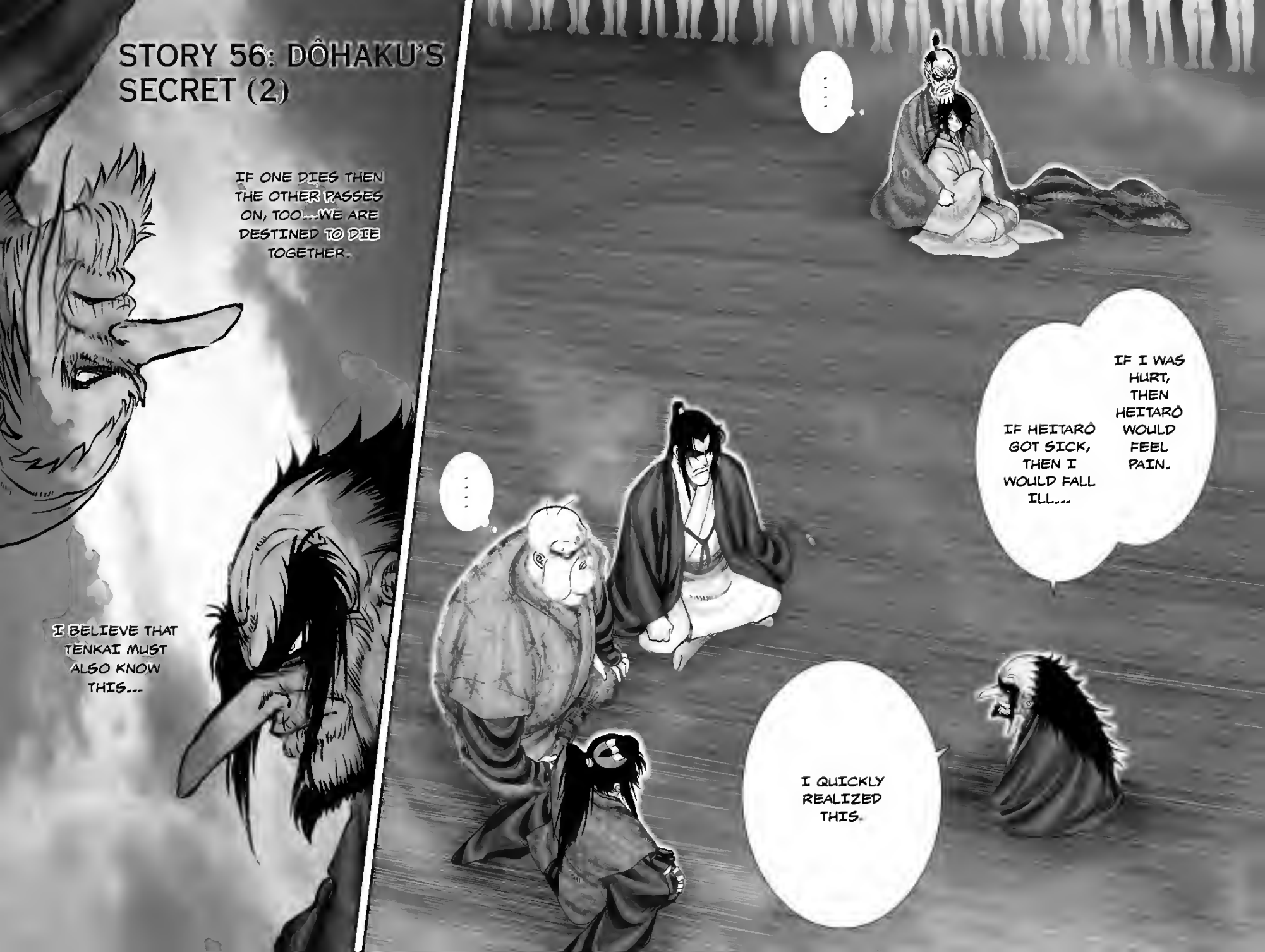

YOU SEE...
BECAUSE IF I DIE...

THREATEN?

STORY 55 END

十兵衛
三代目

WHA... WHAT?!
.....
IF I DIE...
THEN TENKAI WILL DIE AT THE SAME TIME.
.....
EVER SINCE WE WERE YOUNG...
HEH
にっ


STORY 56: DÔHAKU'S SECRET (2)
IF ONE DIES THEN THE OTHER PASSES ON, TOO...WE ARE DESTINED TO DIE TOGETHER.
I BELIEVE THAT TENKAI MUST ALSO KNOW THIS...
.....
IF I WAS HURT, THEN HEITARÔ WOULD FEEL PAIN.
IF HEITARÔ GOT SICK, THEN I WOULD FALL ILL...
.....
I QUICKLY REALIZED THIS.

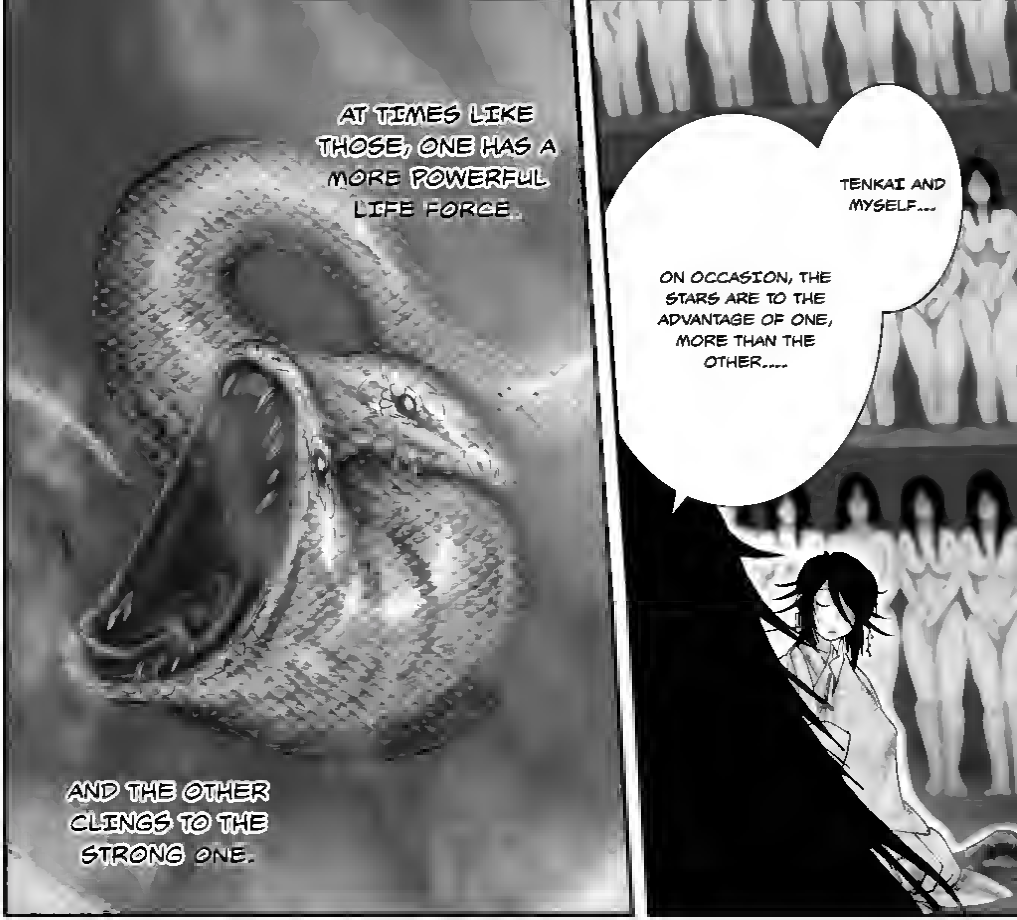
AS LONG AS TENKAI LIVES THEN I WILL NOT DIE...
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND

...AS LONG AS I DON'T DIE, TENKAI WILL LIVE.
.....

IF ANYONE TRIES TO INJURE OR HURT ME...
THEN MY INVINCIBLE BODY WILL REGENERATE.
THAT IS THE SECRET TO HOW I HAVE LIVED UNTIL 107.
OF COURSE... BEING STABBED HURTS.
THE MOMENT THAT I STABBED MYSELF AT SEISHITÔGE
THEN TENKAI MUST HAVE ALSO FELT IT. HEH HEH.
OYURA.
?

YOU ARE YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL....
...
HOWEVER, I'M AFRAID TO SAY THAT YOUR 107 YEAR OLD FATHER...
...MAY LIVE LONGER THAN YOU.

FATHER...YOU SAID THAT IF YOU DIE THEN TENKAI DIES, TOO.
?
HOWEVER, THEN AS LONG AS TENKAI DOESN'T DIE YOU LIVE...
THEN IT'S LIKE TWO SNAKES EATING EACH OTHER'S TAILS...
?
IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?


AT TIMES LIKE THOSE, ONE HAS A MORE POWERFUL LIFE FORCE.
AND THE OTHER CLINGS TO THE STRONG ONE.
TENKAI AND MYSELF...
ON OCCASION, THE STARS ARE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF ONE, MORE THAN THE OTHER....

....

TENKAI IS PROBABLY THE STRONGER ONE...
AND NOW.
AND NOW...
.....

IF THE ENEMY KNOWS THIS SECRET.
THEN IF THEY WANT TO ATTACK TENKAI, THEY WILL ATTACK ME; IF THEY WANT TO ATTACK ME, THEY WILL ATTACK TENKAI.
IF THE ONE WITH THE GREATER LIFE FORCE IS DEFEATED THEN...
THE OTHER ONE WILL DIE...

THIS HAS BEEN MY SECRET FOR 107 YEARS.
YOU MUST NEVER TELL ANYONE... UNDERSTAND?

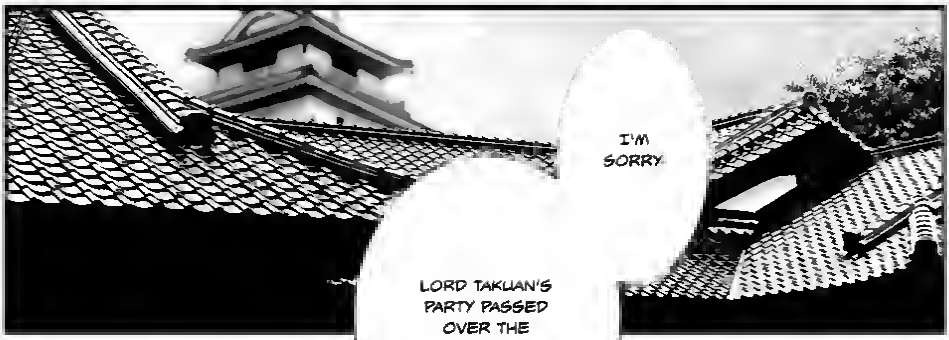
YES.
WE SWEAR!

...

AND WHATEVER BUDDHIST POWER TAKUAN USES.
I WILL NOT DIE.
WHATEVER SWORDSMAN SKILLS THAT HANNYA MASK MAN POSSESSES.

YOU CAN REST EASY.
LORD.
THE FINAL VICTORY WILL BE OURS.

AIZUWAKA-MATSU CASTLE
THE NEXT MORNING


I'M SORRY.

LORD TAKUAN'S PARTY PASSED OVER THE BORDER.

AND FIVE TRAVELING PRIESTS, RETURNED WITHIN HALF AN HOUR...
LORD TAKUAN, ONE WOMAN...
NO... THEY...
AND THEY ENTERED AT YONEZAWA?
THEY WEREN'T ACTING SUSPICIOUSLY...

SO NOW OUR DUTY IS COMPLETE.
WE HAVE SENT THE SEVEN WOMEN IN OUR PROTECTION TO KAMINOYAMA.

WE QUITE LIKE AIZU.
SO WE'VE DECIDED TO TAKE A LITTLE TRIP.
SO WE LOST SIGHT OF THE DIRECTION THEY WERE HEADED!
IT WAS NIGHT-TIME.
PLEASE FORGIVE US!
AND WHERE DID THEY GO?
LORD TAKUAN WAS DRESSED AS A TRAVELING PRIEST, TOO.
IS WHAT HE SAID.
.....

THE TRAVELING PRIESTS WERE ALL MEN. AND THE WOMAN WAS DEFINITELY NOT ONE OF THEM.

COULD THE HORI WOMEN HAVE BEEN AMONGST THEM?

. . . .
THERE WERE NINE LITTERS IN YONEZAWA.
THERE WERE SOME BURLY GUARDS FROM KAMINOYAMA SO WE COULDN'T CHECK INSIDE...
THEY SAID THEY WERE HEADED NORTH.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LITTERS?

. . . .
HMPH, WHAT IS TAKUAN SCHEMING?
HE MUST BE HOPING TO SMUGGLE THE HORI WOMEN IN LATER...

HOWEVER, YOU MUST NOT TOUCH TAKUAN AND THE PRIESTS.
UNDER-STOOD?
. . . .

FOR THE TIME BEING DISCOVER THE WHEREABOUTS OF TAKUAN AND HIS PARTY.
RIGHT.

DÔHAKU-SAMA.
THERE IS ONE MORE...
CLENCH
SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAS HAPPENED!
DA
WHAT IS IT?!
A RED HANNYA MASK HAS BEEN NAILED TO THE FRONT GATE!
WHAT?!

CLENCH

HANNYA MASK...
CLENCH
ぎゅっ。
STORY 56 END

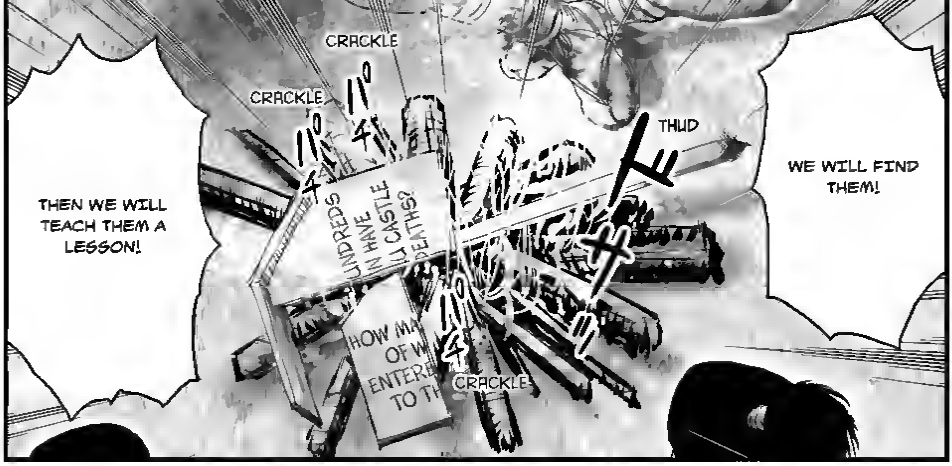
HEH.

NOUHOBO GYABOTE
NIRI-GUSHAA
HOSADARA SAGYARA
SHF
スタ
SHF
スタ

NORTH AIZU
YAMA DISTRICT
HOW MANY HUNDREDS OF WOMEN HAVE ENTERED AIZU CASTLE TO THEIR DEATHS?
RUSTLE
カキ
CHINK

STORY 57: THE ROPE BRIDGE

SUCH IDIOTS...
PERHAPS THE HORI WOMEN HAVE CROSSED THE BORDER INTO AIZU.
BUT THE WRITING LOOKS LIKE THAT OF A WOMAN.
...
CRACKLE
CRACKLE


CRACKLE
CRACKLE
THUD
THEN WE WILL TEACH THEM A LESSON!
WE WILL FIND THEM!
CRACKLE

CRACKLE
CRACKLE
HMM?

NOO!
STRUGGLE
MORE PREY IT SEEMS.
IT'S NOT ONE OF THE HORI WOMEN.
LET ME GO!

...THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN THAT SNOWY HELL UNDER THE CASTLE HAVE INCREASED IMPRESSIVELY.
IN THE MONTH SINCE OUR LORD RETURNED...
THE NEARBY VILLAGE GIRLS... IT WAS ONE OF OUR ORDERS TO COLLECT THEM.
THE PERSON WHO HAS POURED OIL ON THE FIRE IS OYURA...
A BEAUTIFUL... AND TERRIFYING WOMAN.

!
WAIT!
DR

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY SISTER?!
YOU THERE!

WE ARE TO TAKE ALL SUSPICIOUS WOMEN BACK TO WAKAMATSU CASTLE FOR INVESTIGATION.
ORDERS.
SLIP

WE'VE SEEN THE SIGNS.
IF SHE'S TAKEN TO THE CASTLE THEN SHE'S A DEAD GIRL!
WHAT IS SUSPICIOUS ABOUT HER!
I WON'T ALLOW IT!
にやり
GRIN
THEN YOU CAN HAVE YOUR LITTLE SISTER BACK.
IF YOU CAN STOP ME WITH THOSE ARROWS...
HEH... INTERESTING.
RAAAWR
BROTHER!
PYOING

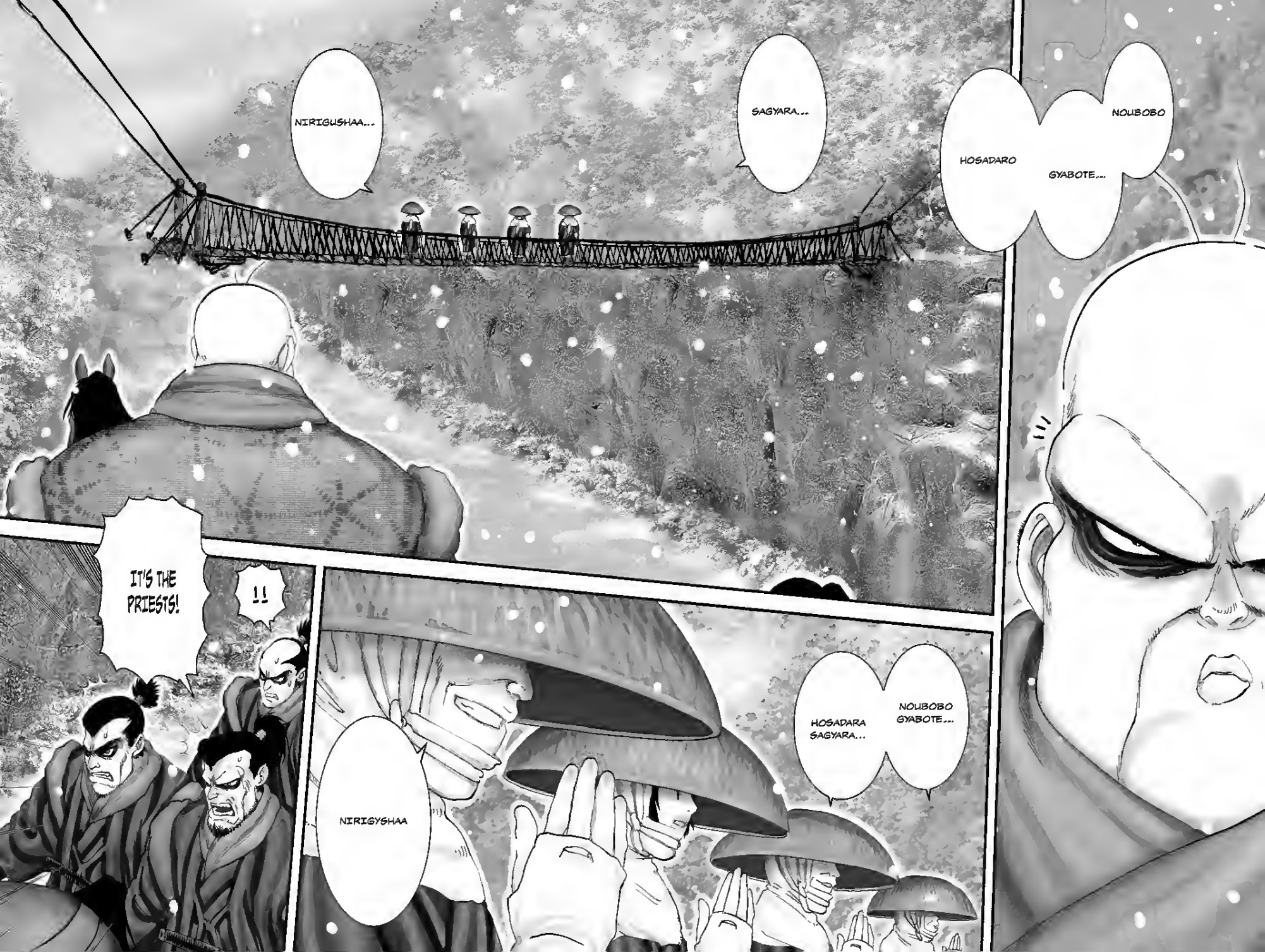
HEH.
HEEEH.
WHOOSH
SWOOSH

THUNK
FWUP
FWUP
SWISH
SWISH
CRACK
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
DROP
CRACK

AAAH ---
AH ---
SETTLE DOWN!
BROOOOTHEEEER!
CHUCKLE
ニヤリ
LISTEN UP!
.....
.....

IF YOU TRY AND HIDE THEM, THEN I WILL SLICE ALL THE VILLAGERS IN TWO LIKE THESE MEN!
YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS!
NORTH OF HERE IS HINOHIRATÔGE! NORTH OF THAT IS YONEZAWA!
THE LIKELI-HOOD THAT THE VILLAINS ARE THERE IS EVEN GREATER!
IF THERE ARE ANY SUSPICIOUS WOMEN THEN YOU WILL DELIVER THEM!

...
...
DA
DA
DA
SNOW


NIRIGUSHAA...
SAGYARA...
NOUBOBO
HOSADARO
GYABOTE...
IT'S THE PRIESTS!
!!
NIRIGYSHAA
HOSADARA SAGYARA...
NOUBOBO GYABOTE...

NIRIGUSHAA
HOSADARO SAGYARA
NOUBOBO GYABOTE
THOSE ARE MEN'S VOICES BUT THE SECOND FROM THE RIGHT ISN'T CHANTING...COULD THAT BE A WOMAN IN THAT HABIT?
!!
THE WOMAN IS A TRAVELING PRIEST?!
I SEE. IF I RUN OUT ONTO THIS BRIDGE...
...
ZAH
THEN IT WILL FALL.

AAAH!
CHING
RUSTLE
TWITCH
HOWEVER, THAT ISN'T GOING TO WORK.
DON'T MOVE!
IF YOU DO I WILL END THE GIRL'S LIFE!
SLIP
!!
SWING
. . . .

SWOOSH
!!
SNAP
OH.
SWISH
SWISH
SNAP

RU...
RUN!
HUP
HUP
HUP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
OH DEAR
GRAB
OH.
UGH
WOBBLE
YANK
DUMPH
DUMPH
DUMPH
YANK
YANK
YANK

STORY 57 END

TIGHTEN
OOF.
HUP
HUP
HUP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
GRAB
TAGAI MATAHACHIRŌ'S WIFE...OSAWA!
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
AHH!

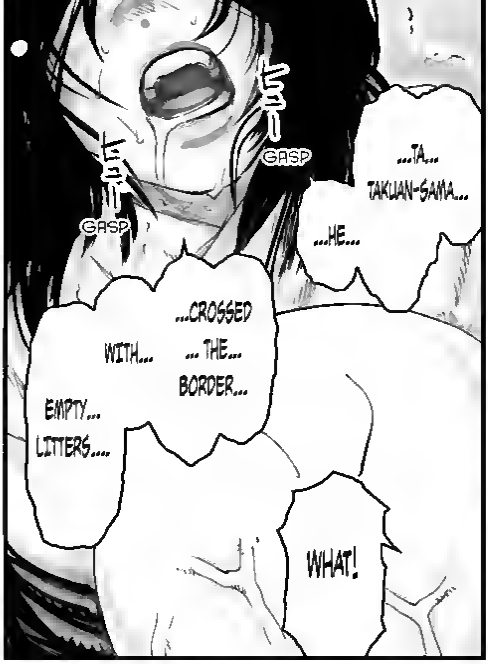
HEH HEH...SUCH A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN...
UHH...

STORY 58: BROKEN BRIDGE (1)

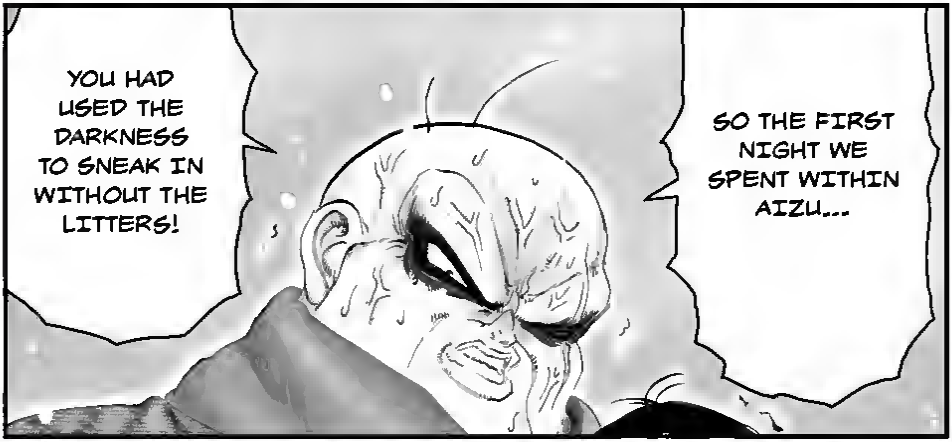
CAPTURE THE PRIESTS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE.
OI.
SQUEEZE

HUH.
HAH...
HAH... AH...
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
A... WE... NEVER...
LEFT...
A...AI... AIZU...

CLICK CLACK
CLICK CLACK
HOW DID YOU GET INTO AIZU?
SO... OSAWA, YOU ENTERED FROM YONEZAWA.
STRUGGLE STRUGGLE
STRUGGLE STRUGGLE
UGH...
PULL


GASP
GASP
...TA...
TAKUAN-SAMA...
...HE...
...CROSSED
... THE...
BORDER...
WITH...
EMPTY...
LITTERS....
WHAT!

WHAT!
WHAT DO
YOU MEAN?!
SPEAK!
YANK
YANK
YANK
UG...
GH...


YOU HAD
USED THE
DARKNESS
TO SNEAK IN
WITHOUT THE
LITTERS!
SO THE FIRST
NIGHT WE
SPENT WITHIN
AIZU...

...
PULL
PULL
MASTER
SHIBA.
CHOKE
GASP

SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
...I WILL MAKE YOU TELL ME WHERE THE OTHER WOMEN ARE.
FLOP
AFTER TORTURING YOU AT AIZU CASTLE
RIGHT!
FWUP
FWUP

FATTY! FATTY!
FOOLS!
IDIOTS!
HAH!

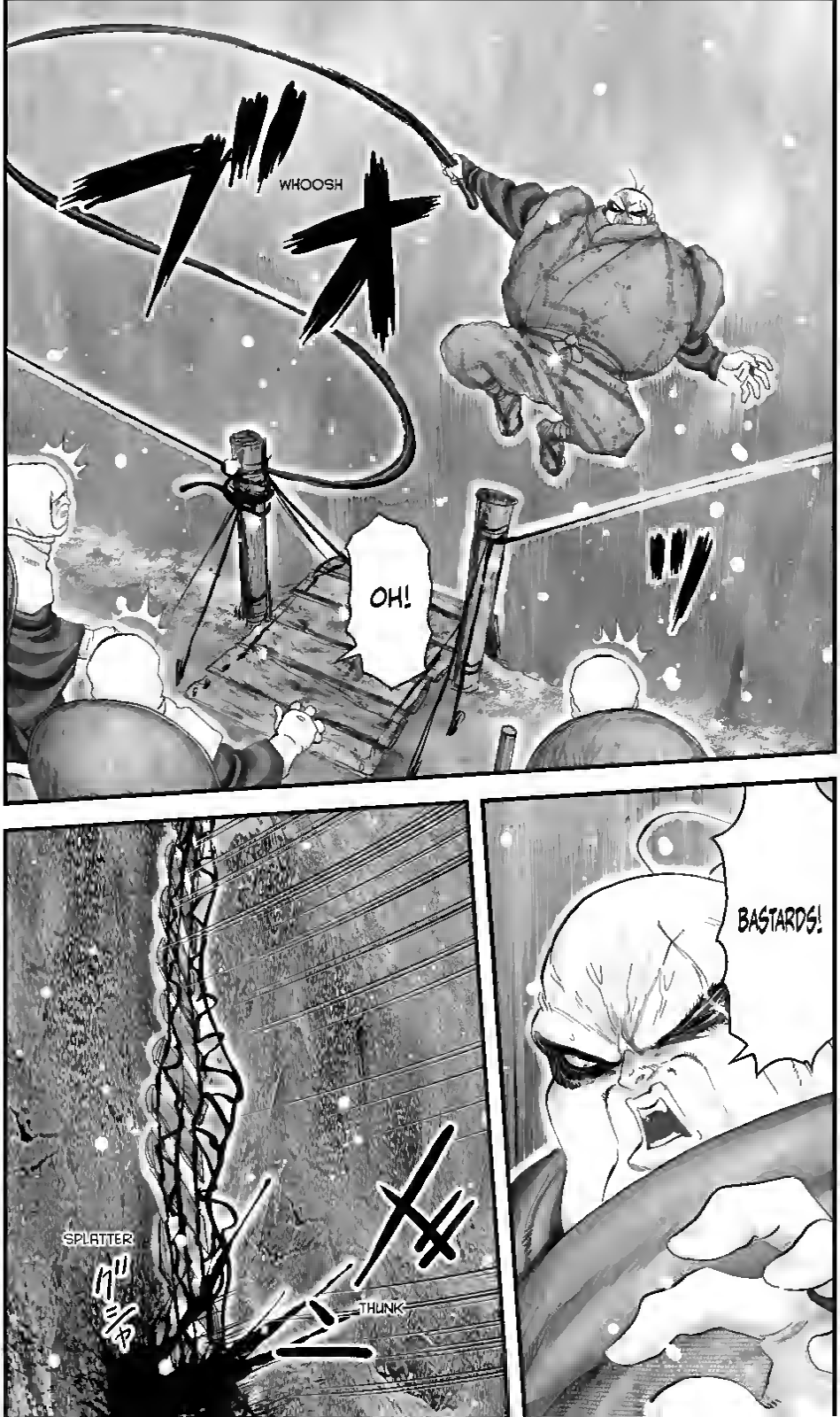
IF YOU DON'T SHUT UP...

TAKE HER AWAY!
THUNK
YOOHOO!

SLICE
!!

AH

!!
SWISH
SWISH
OH!
SNIP
OSAWA!
YOU BITCH!
SWING
UGH..
LADY OSAWA!
SWISH


WHOOSH
OH!
BASTARDS!
SPLATTER
THUNK

RUN AWAY!
RUN AWAY!
PATTER
PATTER
PATTER
PATTER
PATTER
IT'S FATTY!
IT'S FATTY!
THUD
DA
DA
DA
DA
DA
YOU!
PRIEST
SCUM!
SWOOSH

OH
OH
GRASP
OH
NOW I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT ORDERS!
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!
RUSTLE
SLICE
OH MY.
SWISH
SLICE
SLICE
SLICE

RUSTLE
ICHIGANBÔ!
RUSTLE
FWUSH
UWAAAH!
WAAAH!
CHOP
SLICE
SLICE

RUSTLE
!!
OCHIE!
ENEMY OF MY FATHER!
CRUNCH
UGHH

SWOOSH
DO YOU REMEMBER HIM?!
THUD

PANT.
PANT.
PANT.
PANT.
SOMETHING HAPPENED IN THE TREES!
HUH!
CAN WE GET OVER THERE?!
IT'S... IMPOS-SIBLE.
THERE?
WHAT HAPPENED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CLIFF?!

SWING
キシ
IDIOTS!
THEY GOT US!
HANG
THOSE VIXENS!
SLIP
SQUELCH
NGH ---

STORY 58 END

ACK.
UGH.
CHING
キン
CLICK
DIE!
WHOOSH
AH!
CHING
CHING

DO IT!
CUT THEM DOWN!
THERE!
SLICE
SWOOSH

ARGH!
SWOOSH

SHAKE
SHAKE
UGH... UH...
SHAKE
WHOOSH
AAAH!
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
THUD
!
HUH?!
HE...HEY? THERE'S BLOOD...
DRIP

STORY 59: BROKEN BRIDGE (2)

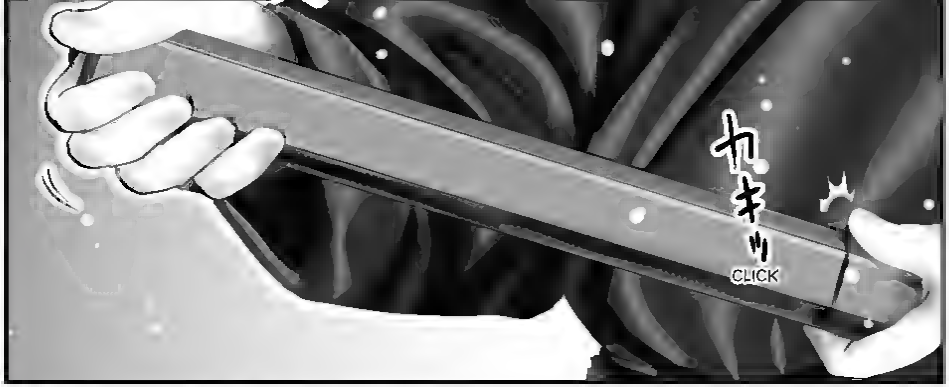
CHING

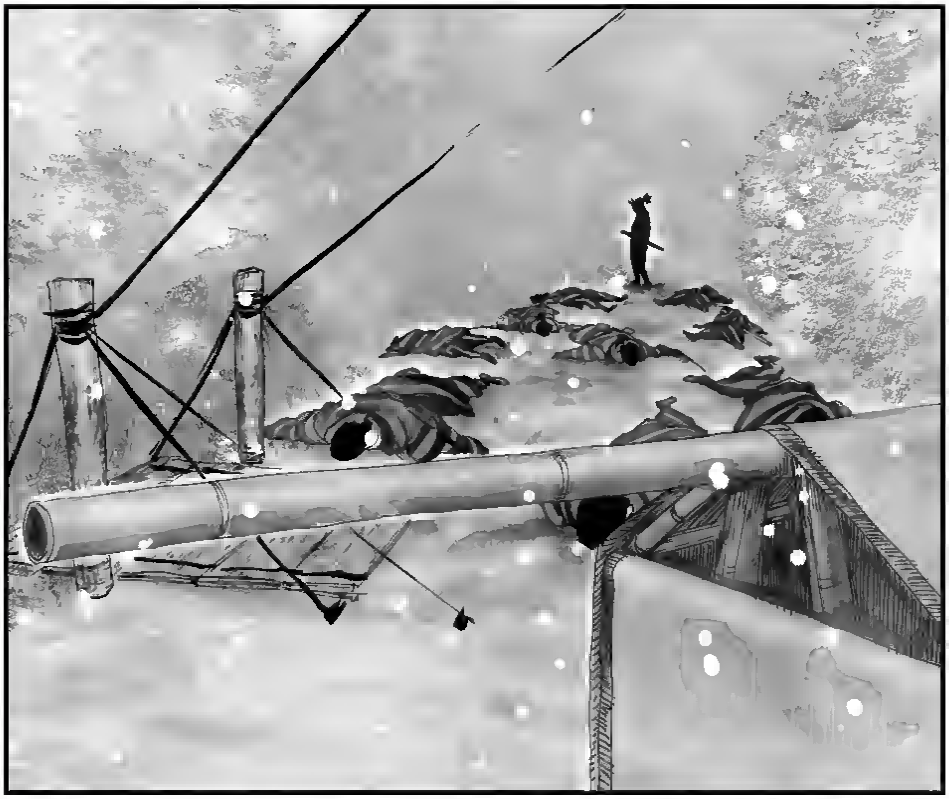
OH DEAR...
ICHIGANBÔ PROMISED NOT TO HARM THEM...
SCRACTH
SCRACTH

...

MEN OF ASHINA.
HERE I COME.
カニャッ
CLICK
THUD
NGH
DA
DA
DA
RAAAAAWWWWR
うおお
おお
お

SLICE


カキッ
CLICK



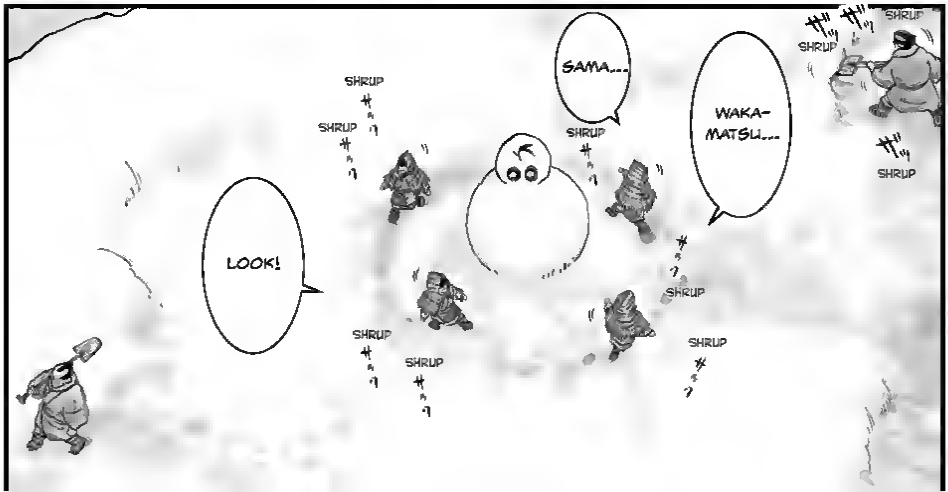
SEEEEN-
SEEEI!

THE LARD ASS!
WE GOT HIM!

GREAT JOB!
OF COURSE! ♡
I DON'T KNOW.
THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE.

AIZUWAKA-MATSU CASTLE
NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1643

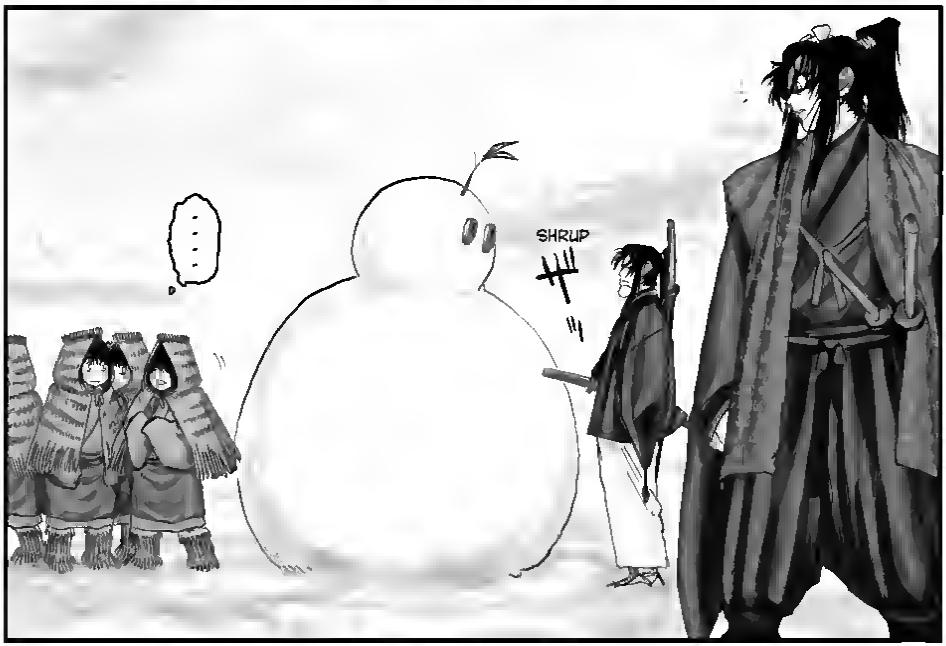
HAPPY DAY.
HAPPY DAY.


SAMA...
WAKA-MATSU...
LOOK!
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP

TWO BIG EYES.
TWO SNAKE'S EYES.
THE SNOW-MAN'S EYES ARE OPEN.
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
SHRUP
TWO SNAKE'S EYES.
HAPPY DAY.
HAPPY DAY.
SHRUP
SHRUP

TWO SNAKE'S EYES...?
...
HEY!
SHRUP
HUH
HUH
FROM WHOM DID YOU HEAR THAT SONG?
THIS MORNING... HERE...
...FROM TAKUAN-SAMA...
WHAT!

HOW?!
TAKUAN?!


SHRUP

SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE

DID YOU...
...MAKE THIS?

KOSHI-CHIRŌ...
スラッ
SLIDE

THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG HERE...
CUT OPEN THAT SNOW-MAN.

DA DA DA DA DA
!!
?!

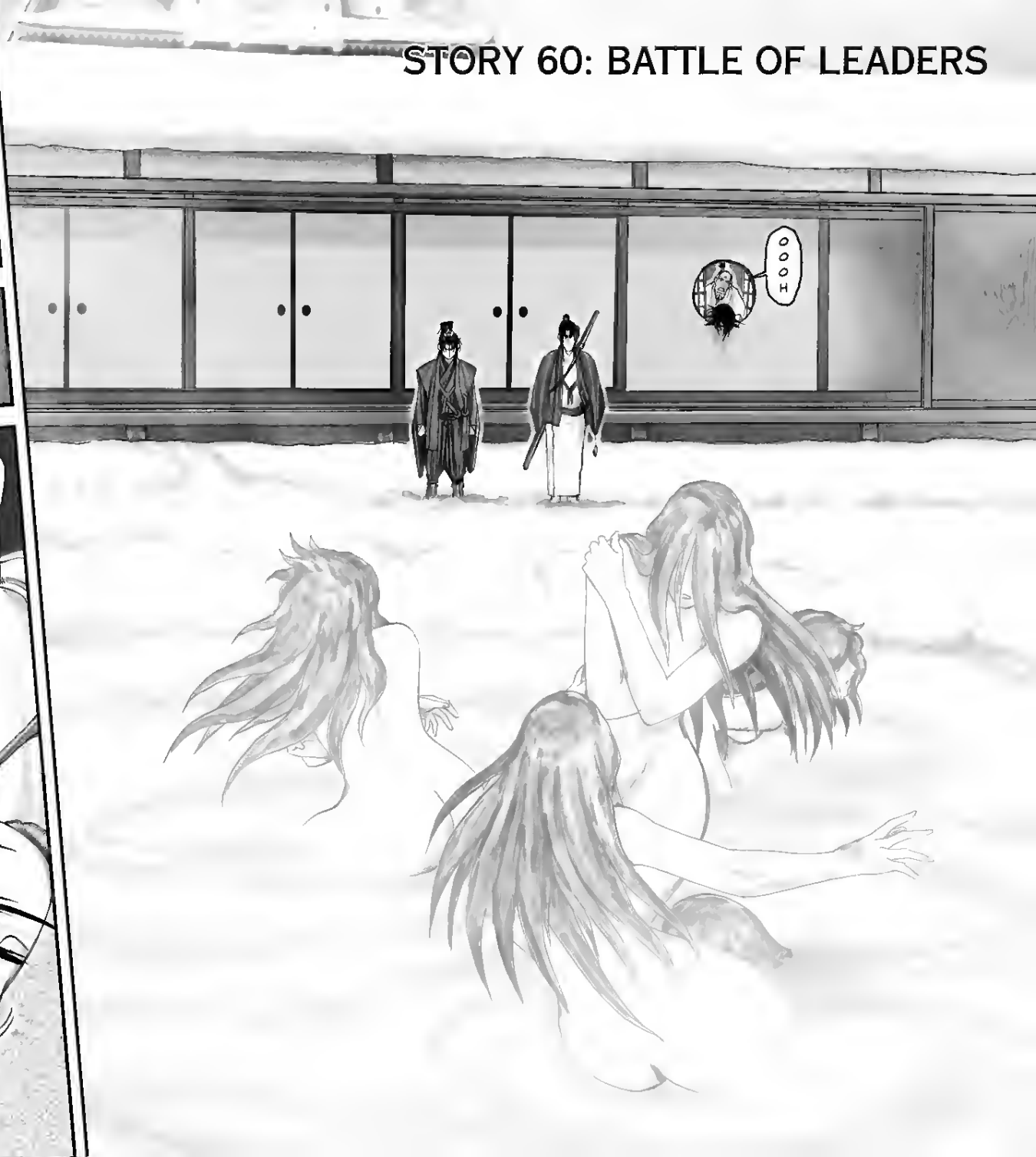
SHUF
SHUF
SHUF
SHUF
SHUF
THUD
ACK!
AGH!
SHRUP
SHRUP

TWO SNAKE'S EYES...
HAPPY DAY.
HAPPY DAY.
TWO BIG EYES
TWO SNAKE'S EYES.
THE SNOWMAN'S EYES HAVE OPENED.

STORY 59 END

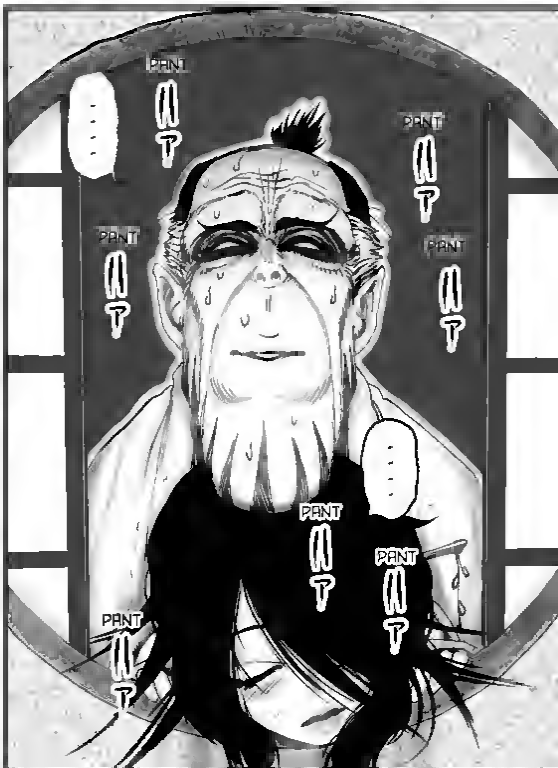
SHAKE
ゆさっ
SHAKE
ゆさっ
.....
NGH...
CLATTER
ガタッ

STORY 60: BATTLE OF LEADERS



OOOH
...

FATHER
...

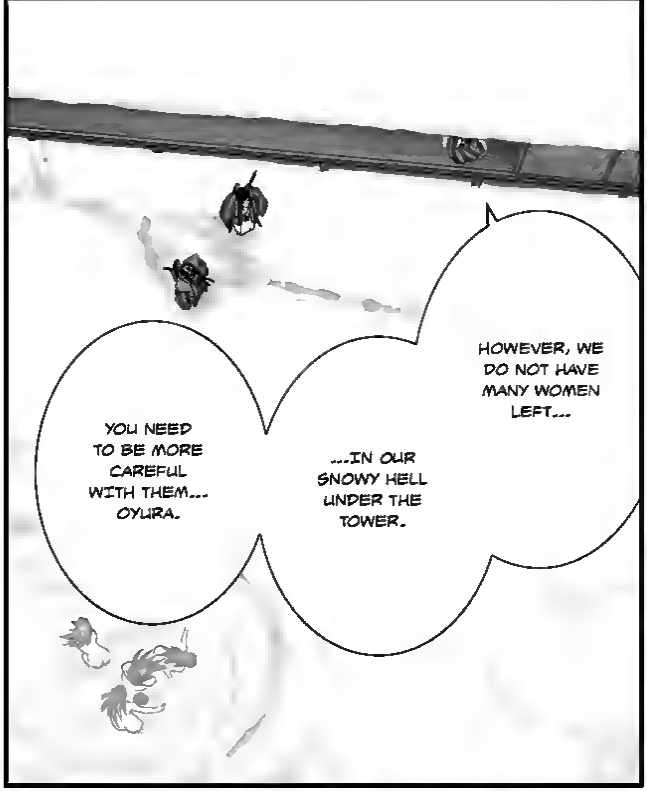

PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
...
...

WHAT IS THIS?

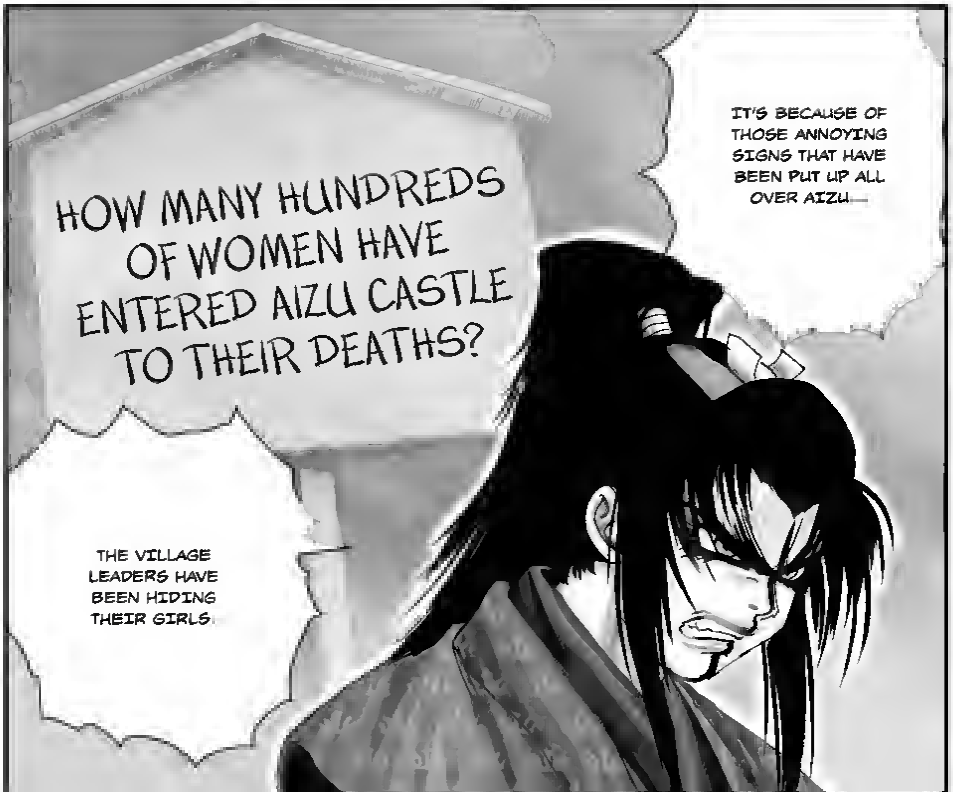
DŌHAKU-SAMA.
WE THREW THEM OUT LAST NIGHT IN CHAINS.

HUMANS ARE SUCH STUBBORN CREATURES.
THIS IS HOW WE FOUND THEM IN THE MORNING...

FATHER.
IT WAS MY IDEA...


YOU NEED TO BE MORE CAREFUL WITH THEM... OYUKA.
...IN OUR SNOWY HELL UNDER THE TOWER.
HOWEVER, WE DO NOT HAVE MANY WOMEN LEFT...

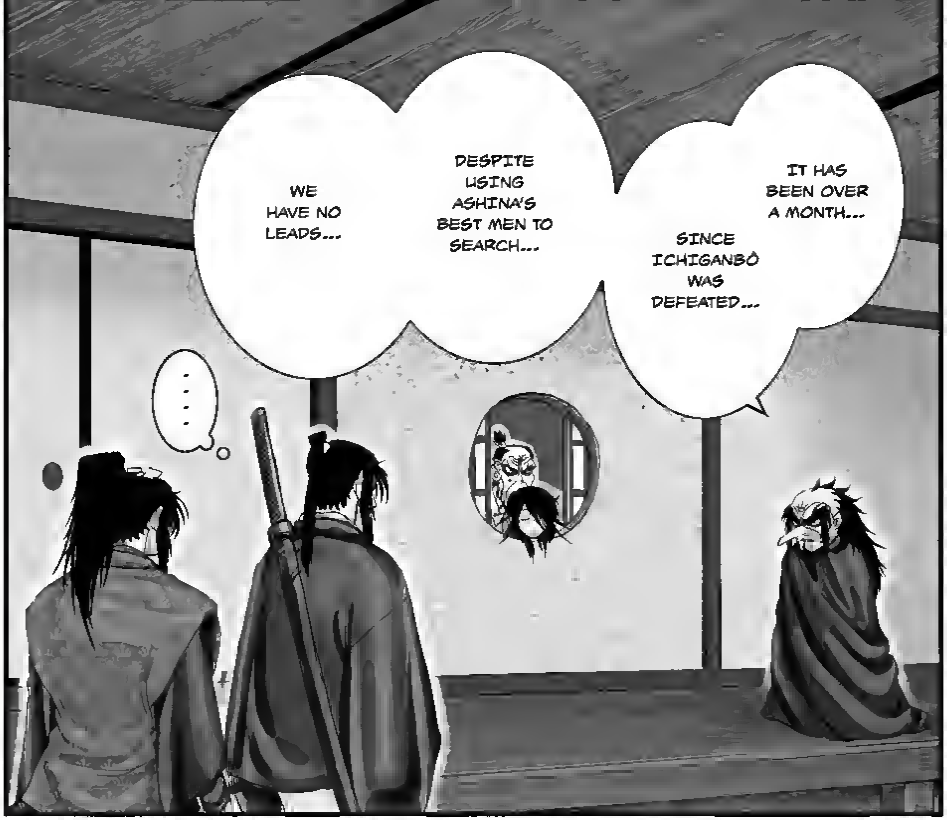
HMPH...
ニヤリ
GRIN
GOOD IDEA.


HOW MANY HUNDREDS OF WOMEN HAVE ENTERED AIZU CASTLE TO THEIR DEATHS?
IT'S BECAUSE OF THOSE ANNOYING SIGNS THAT HAVE BEEN PUT UP ALL OVER AIZU...
THE VILLAGE LEADERS HAVE BEEN HIDING THEIR GIRLS.

DO YOU STILL NOT KNOW WHERE TAKUAN AND THE HORI WOMEN ARE?!
DÔHAKU!

WICKED PEASANTS!
ACK!
CLENCH

THEY ARE PROBABLY UNDER THE PROTECTION OF AN INSUBORDINATE VILLAGE LEADER.


WE HAVE NO LEADS...
DESPITE USING ASHINA'S BEST MEN TO SEARCH...
SINCE ICHIGANBÔ WAS DEFEATED...
IT HAS BEEN OVER A MONTH...
. . . .

DÔHAKU-SAMA, PLEASE ADD US TO THE SEARCH TEAMS.

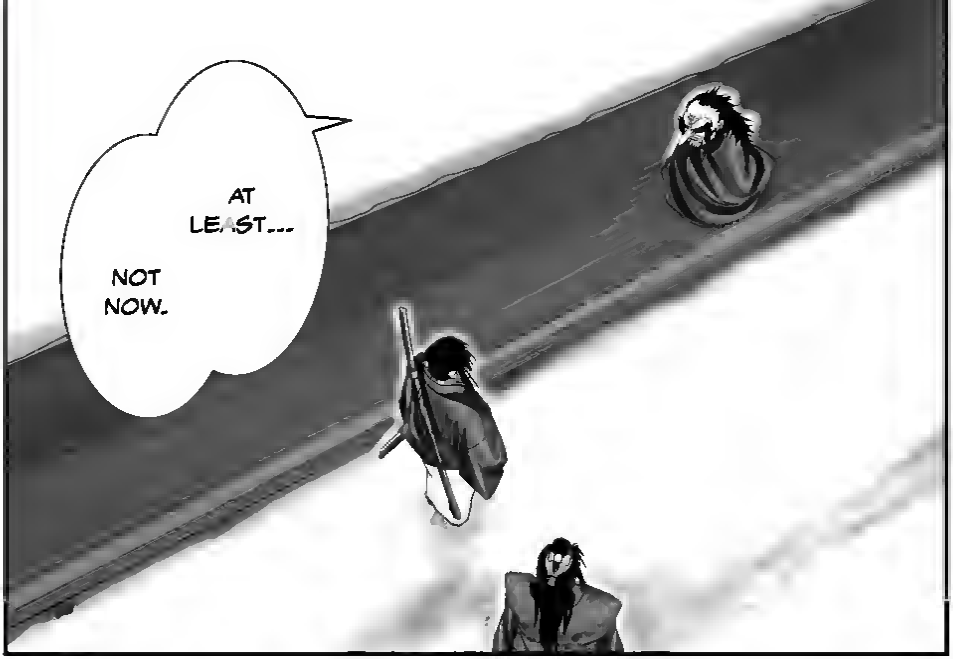
NO, I WON'T ALLOW IT!
YOU ARE MY BODYGUARDS!
YOU MAY NOT LEAVE THE CASTLE!
...
DŌHAKU-SAMA!
LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY
I REALIZED SOMETHING AS I WAS LISTENING TO THE SEARCH TEAM'S REPORTS
...

TRAVELING PRIESTS?!
THE HORI WOMEN...
MAY BE DRESSED AS TRAVELING PRIESTS AND TRAVELING AROUND INSIDE AIZU...
WOMEN!
AS TRAVELING PRIESTS?!

THEY WEAR UNUSUAL PRIEST'S HOODS UNDER THEIR STRAW HATS...
ARE DIFFERENT TO THE OTHER PRIESTS TRAVELING IN OUR DOMAIN.
ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS, TAKUAN'S

MOREOVER, THERE ARE LOTS OF TRAVELING PRIESTS, ALL DRESSED THE SAME...
ON THE SAME DAY AT THE SAME TIME...
THERE ARE FIVE OF THEM THERE AND THEN FOUR OF THEM THERE...
IF WE ADD THEIR NUMBERS TOGETHER...
WE CAN DEDUCE THAT THERE ARE FAR MORE THAN SEVEN OF TAKUAN'S MEN...
...NOW WALKING OUR DOMAIN-

I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE RUN THOSE PRIESTS THROUGH WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE! THEN THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN NO THREAT TO THE KATÔ HOUSE!
AND YOU ORDERED FOR TAKUAN'S MEN TO NOT BE HARMED?!
BASTARDS!
NO...
I HAVE MY RESERVATIONS ABOUT CRUSHING TAKUAN ON AIZU LAND. HE IS THE PRIEST OF THE CURRENT SHOGUN.


AT LEAST...
NOT NOW.

WHAT WAY?

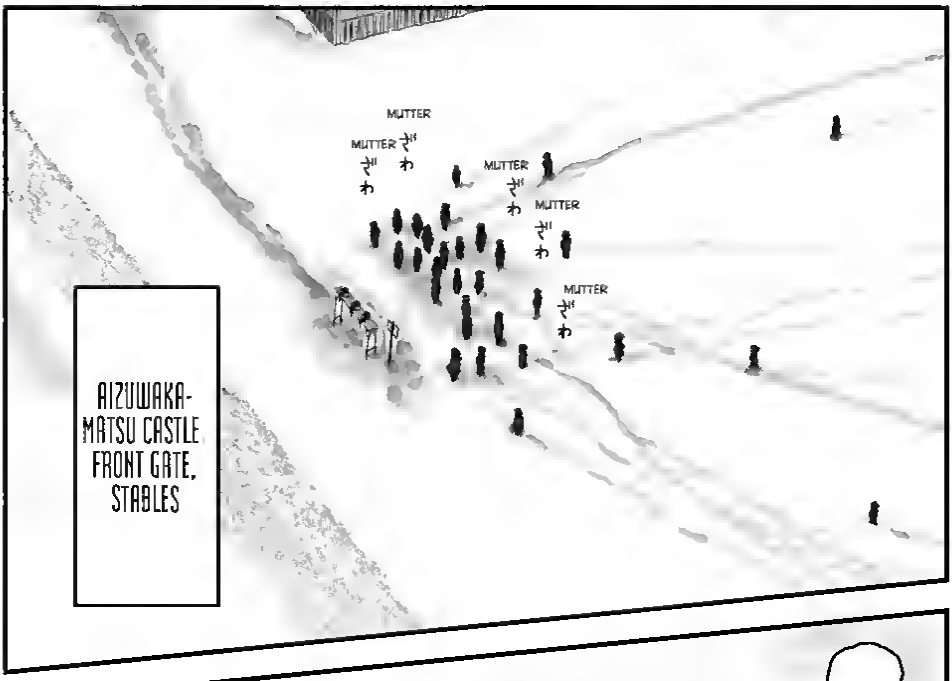
...
WE HAVE A WAY TO CRUSH TAKUAN.

ILLUSION...

I WILL PUT A SPELL ON TAKUAN.
USING "DREAM ECHO..."

...
ILLUSION... DREAM ECHO!

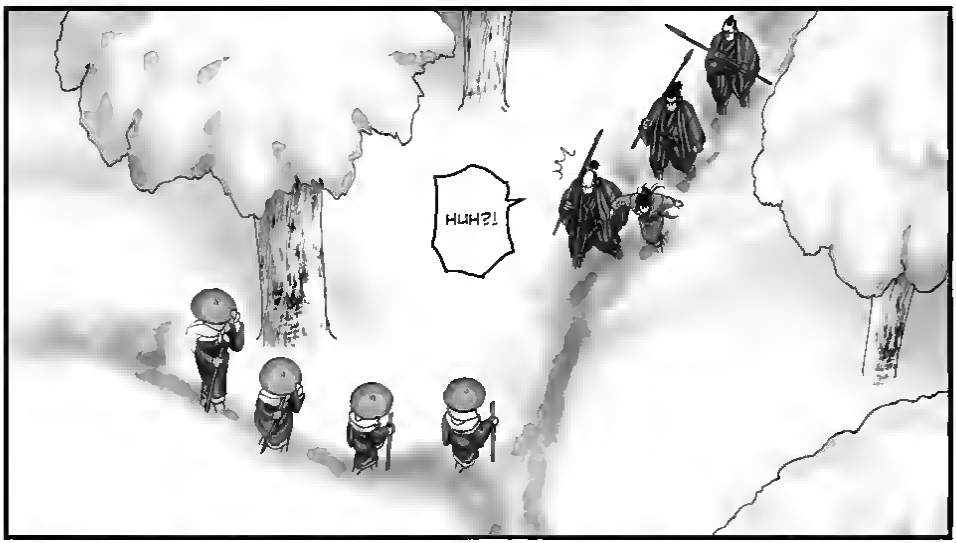
...MUST BE CLOSER TO THIS CASTLE.
NIYARI
GRIN
FOR THAT FIRST TAKUAN...


MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER
AIZUWAKA-MATSU CASTLE FRONT GATE, STABLES

IN...
INHUMAN ...
AH...
...
QUIVER
QUIVER

THESE MEN COLLUDED WITH ENEMIES OF OUR LORD. THIS HIGH TREASON IS UNFORGIVABLE. ANY OTHER TRAITORS WILL BE EXECUTED IN THE SAME MANNER.
THE HEADS OF THREE TRAITORS.
THE HEADS OF THREE TRAITORS.
THESE ARE...
THE GIRLS THAT WERE TAKEN TO THE CASTLE...

SOUTHERN AIZU, OUTSIDE OF TAJIMA VILLAGE
WALK PROPERLY!
SHRUF
SHRUF
SHRUF
SHRUF
SOB
STAGGER
PANT
PANT
UH...
PANT
IT'S AN HONOR TO BE TAKEN TO THE CASTLE!
GRIP
YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY TO SERVE!
STAGGER
SHRUF
SHRUF
SHRUF
SHRUF


HUH?!

WHY IS THE VILLAGE BURNING?

HAVE YOU BEEN COMMITTING WICKED DEEDS?

TAKUAN!
HAH!
SWOOSH
STORY 60 END
TO BE CONTINUED
IN VOLUME 8

about the authors

FŪTARO YAMADA

Born in 1922 in Hyogo Prefecture, Fūtaro Yamada made his debut as a novelist while still a student at Tokyo Medical University. Yamada was known for his mystery novels such as *Ganchuu No Akuma*. Later, his Ninja Scrolls series became wildly popular. He penned a wide body of literature, including the period piece *Makaitensei*, as well as several collections of essays such as *Ato Senkai No Banmeshi* and *Ningen Rinjyuu Zukan*. He passed away on July 28, 2001.

MASAKI SEGAWA

Masaki Segawa made his debut in 1997 with the series *Senma Monogatari*, which ran in the weekly comic *Morning*. In 1998, he began his long-running *Uppers* magazine series *Onigiri Jyuuzou*, which ended in the year 2000. This is his second-longest-running series and his first adaptation. He loves cats and watermelon. He currently resides in Funabashi.

Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more an art than a science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

Dewa, page 23

Dewa is no longer a province of Japan, but was located in the area that is now Yamagata and Akita prefecture.

The *Ōoku*, page 49

The Shogun was very protective of his many concubines, and arrangements were made so that they should live separately from the rest of the world in a part of the Edo castle called the *Ōoku*. Here the Shogun's wife, family, and concubines would live. It is believed that at points in its history, several thousand women lived in the *Ōoku*. It also soon became a source of political intrigue for the Tokugawa government. The women, however, would not have been allowed out without special permission and would most certainly be heavily protected.

Lady Kasuga, page 49

A member of a prominent Samurai family of the time. Lady Kasuga established the *Ōoku*.

Matsudaira Izunokami, page 49

Matsudaira Izunokami was a leading general in the Tokugawa government.

***Koku*, page 53**

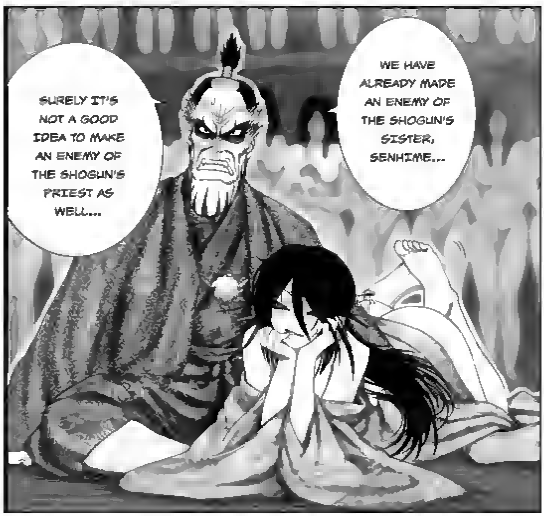
Koku is a traditional unit of measurement in Japan. It was not an area of measurement, as such, but instead a quantity of rice, thus it became an assessment of wealth. One *koku* is approximately 150 grams and was allegedly enough to feed a person for a year. To put Akinari's wealth into perspective, the largest domain in Japan was worth just over one million *koku*.

Aizuwakamatsu Castle, page 83

Aizuwakamatsu Castle is also known as Tsuruga Castle and was the center of the military and government in the Aizu region until 1868. Tenshu was the largest tower of the castle and was built by Akinari during this era.

Princess Sen (Senhime), page 94

Senhime's other name was Tenjuin (see note for volume 5). She was the eldest daughter of the second shogun of the Tokugawa period, Tokugawa Hidetada (the third son of Tokugawa Ieyasu). Senhime was married twice but lost both husbands. After the death of her second husband she became a Buddhist nun and took the name Tenjuin. Her dramatic and tragic life has been the subject of many legends in Japan.


SURELY IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA TO MAKE AN ENEMY OF THE SHOGUN'S PRIEST AS WELL...
WE HAVE ALREADY MADE AN ENEMY OF THE SHOGUN'S SISTER, SENHIME...

Begging, page 131

Buddhist monks are not permitted to work so all their living comes from alms (begging).

Women's Script, page 131

In this period of Japanese history it is very likely that a women's script would be different to a man's in form and also in grammar. There would also probably be less usage of Chinese derived words indicating differences in education.

SUCH IDIOTS—
PERHAPS THE HORI WOMEN HAVE CROSSED THE BORDER INTO AIZU.
BUT THE WRITING LOOKS LIKE THAT OF A WOMAN'S
CRACKLE
CRACKLE

***Amazake*, page 150**

Amazake is a traditional alcoholic drink in Japan. It is made from fermented rice and the taste is sweet.